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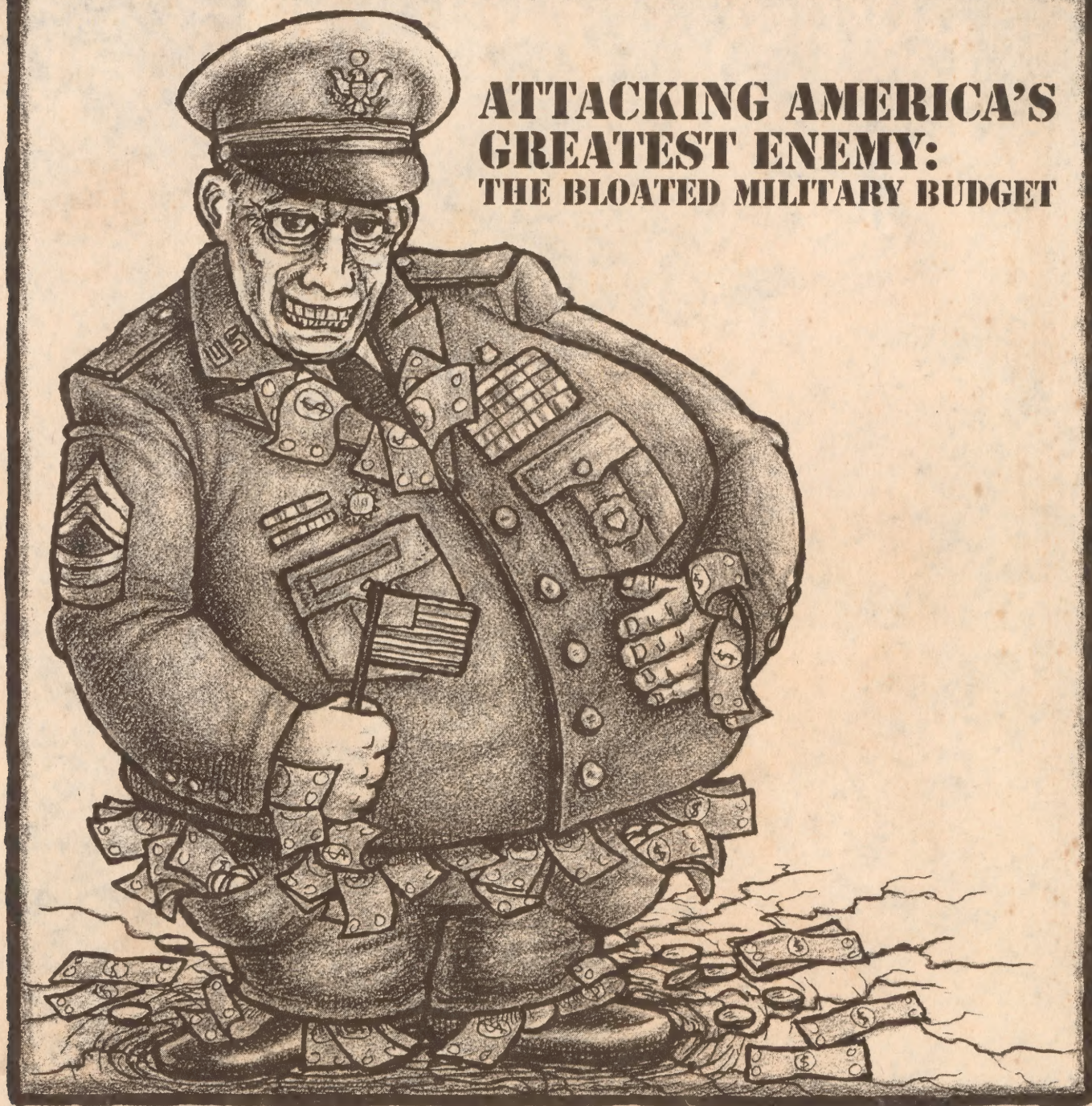
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October/November '00

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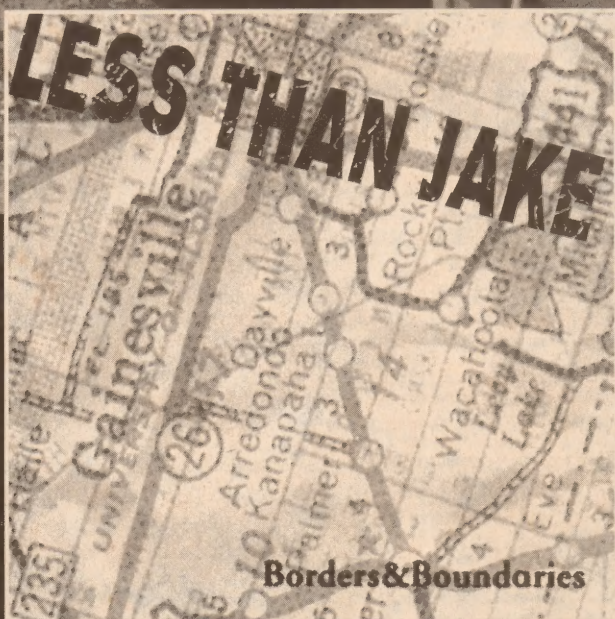
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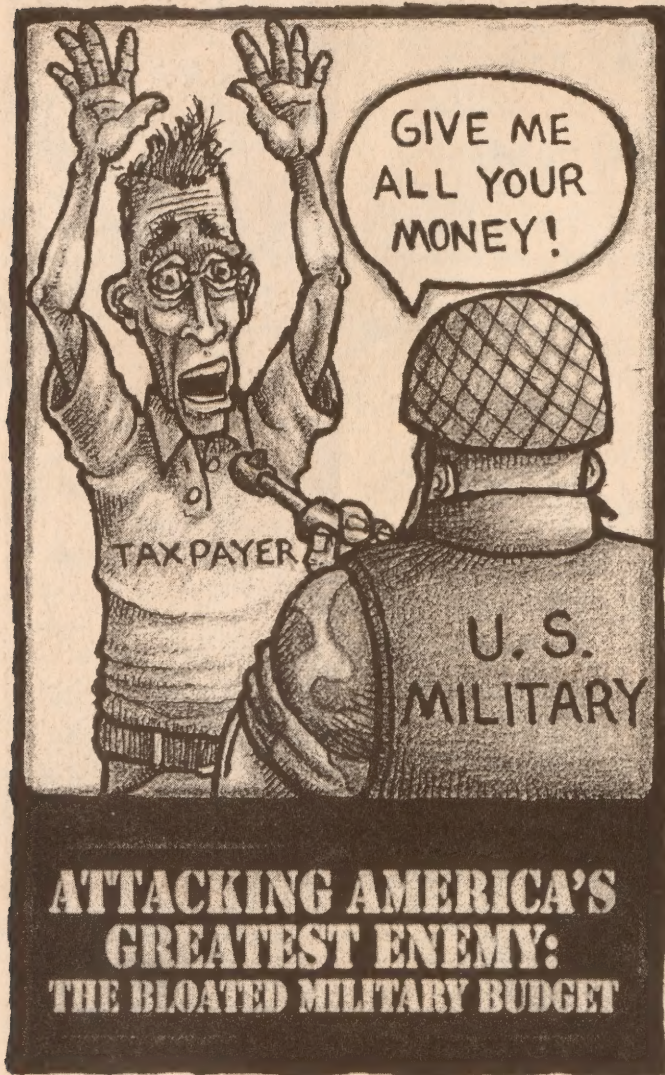
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things within

IMPACT PRESS • ISSUE 29 • OCTOBER/NOVEMBER '00



by Craig Butler

America has fallen into a trap of pouring money into a military budget in such a way that our realistic defense needs are not met, resulting in a scandalous waste of money and resources. Do you want the proof that it's time to trim the fat? Simply read the article. • PAGE 26

"A man can live and be healthy without killing animals for food; therefore, if he eats meat, he participates in taking animal life merely for the sake of his appetite. And to act so is immoral."

-- Leo Tolstoy

"The urge to save humanity is almost always only a false-face for the urge to rule it."

-- H.L. Mencken

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IMPACT **press**

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A Fact from IMPACT: In 1952, CBS made history by being the first to use a computer, the UNIVAC-I, to forecast the presidential election.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



From The Editor

In mid-September, South Carolina Attorney General Charlie Condon called for state prosecutors to band together in a lawsuit against Hollywood, akin to the action states took against the tobacco industry. The lawsuit suggestion came on the heels of a scathing Federal Trade Commission report that asserted the entertainment industry was peddling adult material to underage audiences.

What the hell is going on? Welcome to Fahrenheit 451. Or maybe Orwell's 1984 was only off by a couple dozen years.

While I'm not supportive of targeting young audiences for movies or games they shouldn't have access to anyway (R-rated movies, mature-rated video games), I have a hard time swallowing the idea of a lawsuit. Actually, I think it's totally absurd.

Who the hell do these legislators and lawyers think they are? The tobacco industry lied numerous times about a product that unequivocally causes cancer. But there is far from any proof that the entertainment industry is responsible for an increase in teen violence.

These idiots that "run" this country are so misguided. Lieberman and Gore are so busy jumping on the bandwagon of "bashing Hollywood" that they fail to see that the real problem lies at home.

The only person(s) who should be responsible for what a child watches or plays should be that child's parent(s). I realize that a parent can't watch a child's every move. But the last thing we need is to legislate or sue companies that fail to parent other people's children. That isn't the job of these businesses.

I don't hear Lieberman outraged that in Maine and Arizona, for instance, a 10-year-old child can go hunting. Personally, I'd rather a child see fake violence on TV than be exposed to actually committing the violence. And hell, a Sunday football game is as violent as any action flick I've seen – and far more real. But where is the outrage at parent's who take their young children out to kill and allow them to watch men pound each other to the ground?

It's definitely not coming from either of the two, useless, big-name candidates for president. Oh no, Hollywood is a far easier target to attack. Attacking irresponsible parents won't help their campaigns. Who cares what's truly important?! It's all about vote getting.

Well, they aren't getting my vote.

• craig mazer •

Make an IMPACT

National Coalition Against Censorship
<http://www.ncac.org/>

Motion Picture Assoc. of America
<http://www.mpa.org/>

Parent's Television Council (PTC)
<http://www.parentstv.org/>

Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

IMPACT:

[Darren Kramer's] article was great ("A New Kind of Revolution", Issue #27). I'm an aging baby-boomer, who made his way using the capitalist system to my advantage, as best I could. And then, with money put aside, have opted out of the system. But that leaves the system unchanged. Working/volunteering with the Green Party, I feel, is a step in the right direction. Any other suggestions would be listened to. I agree, the system is, indeed, set to self-destruct.

Yours, Michael Schur

IMPACT:

I am responding to the wonderful article written by Patricia Howard about greyhound racing ("Dogs in Danger: The Truth Behind Greyhound Racing", Issue #28). My husband and I adopted our first greyhound, Allan, 5 years ago from a local vet on the day he was going to be killed. His racing kennel dumped him there with three other dogs when they were no longer fast enough. The other three weren't as lucky as Allan. We immediately wanted to help these dogs once we realized how beautiful and gentle they were. So we volunteered at our local Greyhound Pets of America (GPA) chapter.

We worked with GPA for three years, getting dogs from the racing kennels, fostering the dogs in our homes, and finding homes for them. At first we thought this was how we could help other dogs like Allan — we could adopt them all. Wrong! And we soon found this out. We quickly began to see what an abusive industry greyhound racing is. Just about every dog that came into our home was infested with fleas, ticks, and internal parasites. A lot of dogs had broken limbs and some were so scared you would have to chase them around the room and corner them to even pet. This became too much to handle and we wanted to speak out thinking that there are others out there like us who think "they can all be adopted." When

we approached the president of GPA she told us "no way!" That if we said anything bad about the industry GPA would no longer get dogs. We were told to remain "neutral".

How could we consciously do this knowing and seeing what these dogs go through and not say anything? We would have been no better than the industry itself. We were told we could leave and go protest or keep our mouths shut. We left and soon after staged a protest of about 50 people at our local track. This is what we have been doing ever since. Our goal is to educate as many people as possible about this so-called "sport" known as greyhound racing. People need to know everything we saw in our three years doing greyhound adoptions. People need to know the suffering that goes on at the hands of the racing industry. Thank you Patricia for being their voice and for not letting their cries go unheard.

Carla and Bryan Wilson
Winter Springs, FL

IMPACT:

I was encouraged by Darren Kramer's optimistic call to arms against corporate/government oppression ("A New Kind of Revolution", Issue #27). I say optimistic because, unfortunately, I don't see the revolution occurring for generations. The reason is that the majority of the working class, the would-be backbone of a social revolution, is simply not angry enough, yet. People today are either ignorant to the corruption that stunts (or restrains) their lives or are just content with their controlled lives. Until that majority finally sees the light, we need to keep informing the public and stretching the boundaries of restraint. Once the majority finally becomes enlightened to what has been taken from them for years, we will then be able to come together and have our social revolution and all our social boundaries will be broken. Hopefully, the coming generation will prove me wrong and Mr. Kramer right.

David Montez

IMPACT:

Thank you...and bless you for writing this piece ("Dogs in Danger: The Truth Behind Greyhound Racing", Issue #28).

I am a proud owner of a retired racer [greyhound] who broke her hock while racing. She is currently living like a queen, as she deserves, in my humble home. Her presence brings us endless joy every day. We also are fostering a male, a two year old track flunkie. He was adopted into a home and returned to us for lame reasons. Anyway, it was your article that has let me know that I need to keep this boy. He's been through enough. Thank you, I have been waiting for a sign. His name is Goodness...and the name says it all!

Goodness makes four dogs in our home. We'll make room for more greys who need a place to camp. Countless people have given me a hand when I needed it, so I will pass this kindness along through my canine buddies.

Thanks again!
Carla Congdon

IMPACT:

I strongly agree that some form of population control has to be enacted ("Population Control", Feb/Mar 1999, Issue #19). Anyone with common sense should look around and see that the world is overpopulated. Global warming is very scary. How could anyone survive in large cities especially where everything is concrete and high rises if there was suddenly a black out where all power failed? Look at this summer. The weather was much hotter and the sun was unbearable.

Would it not be better for all of us to have not over 2 children and everyone live in comfort. I am not talking luxury, I am talking comfort. The world is crowded and no one has the right to keep producing. Forgive me if I am wrong but I think it is time we all woke up.

Anonymous



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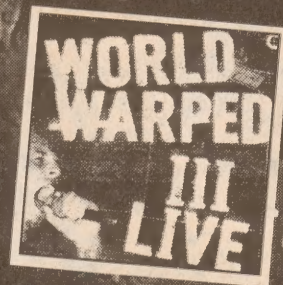
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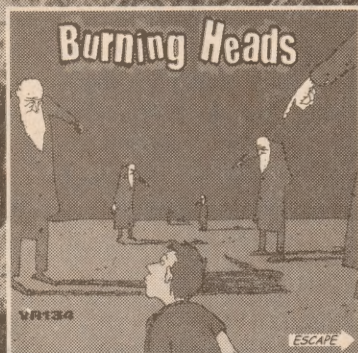
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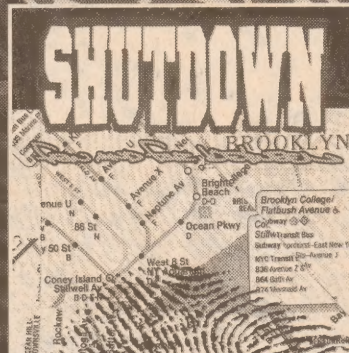


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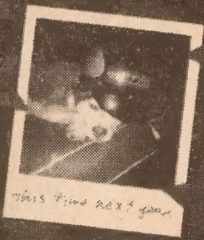
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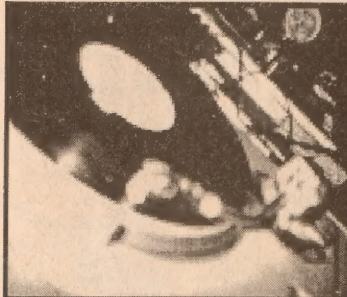


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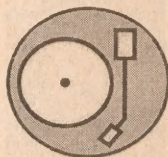
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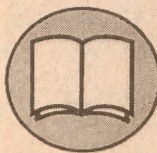


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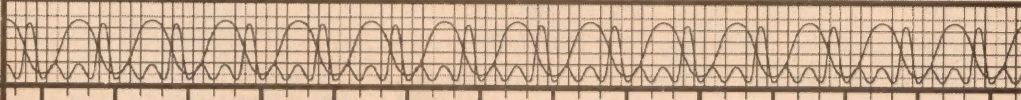
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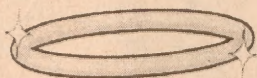
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Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan
morris sullivan



I had decided that this would be my last "Notes from the Cultural Wasteland."

I'd noticed I was beginning to repeat myself, so I thought I'd already said about all I had to say about Culture. Then some things happened that changed my mind. I decided that perhaps some things bear repeating, and maybe I wasn't finished commenting on culture after all.

First, my town's oldest, longest-established theatre ceased production. Then another theatre, a small one that produced mainly edgy works by local playwrights, shut its doors. That means about twenty fewer shows will get produced in my town (Orlando) this year, and about 200 fewer artists will get to work onstage, and a half-dozen or so local playwrights won't get their plays produced.

I'm sure you're wondering why any of these events should mean a damn thing to you. So you're thinking, "Why should I care if some theatres in another town no longer exist?" You might even think, "Hell, I don't even go to plays; so why should I give a damn if they ALL go away?"

Here's why. You live in a community, and therefore, you have a culture. In fact, by simply existing, you help to create your culture. Do you like your culture? If so, you should want to help it survive, grow, and evolve. If not, you should want to help change it.

I live in a community made up of a few million people, and we're pretty supportive of the arts. We have one of the better arts funding organizations around, governments that recognize the benefits to quality-of-life that a vibrant and vital arts "scene" can provide, and an incredible pool of talent from which to draw. We're lucky.

Maybe you live in a town like mine, or maybe you live in one of those places where everyone complains that there's "no culture." They're wrong—it just may be that your culture has little to do with opera, ballet, and theatre and more to do with Garth Brooks on the radio, beanie babies on the mantle, and Monday night football on TV. Maybe you even prefer it that way.

But right now, in your community, there's a small theatre struggling to survive. Or there's a group of people trying to establish a sidewalk art festival. Or a film festival. Or a poetry reading. You should support their efforts. Here are a couple of reasons.

First, education funding has been cut all over the country and programs have disappeared as a result. In many areas this has improved, but in others, much of what remains is designed to help make better employees out of American students, not necessarily better thinkers. The humanities help people learn to think critically, and with public education teaching fewer of those skills, it's

up to community organizations to pick up the slack.

Second, few schools teach much in the way of goal-directed behavior. In other words, few students learn how a series of challenging tasks can lead to a rewarding consequence. Grades don't mean much to many kids. My experience with this comes mainly from theatre, but I'm sure it's true in other art forms as well. I've seen aimless, at-risk kids find direction and increased self-esteem just from working on one show and seeing that their work created something good.

Perhaps most important, however, is that the small, local arts group provides the fertile ground needed for the culture to grow and evolve. Right now, there's some kid reading his poetry at a coffeehouse, and that kid's going to end up writing screenplays or creating lyrics for some hip-hop artist that's going to become incredibly popular.

Somewhere else, there's a kid auditioning for his first play and she's going to eventually move on to Broadway or Hollywood. There's a senior citizen somewhere who's decided to spend his retirement painting and his paintings are going to eventually go from sidewalk festival to New York gallery and change the way people look at things. There's a musician out there who'll become the next Phillip Glass, a dancer who'll become the next Twyla Tharpe, and a digital artist who'll help create a whole new medium.

Maybe you're one of these people. If you are, you need a few things. You're won't get plucked off the street by some angel who recognizes your genius; you're going to have to work your ass off to develop your craft, and you're going to need a place to do that. Maybe your town will fund the development of venues for art; however, to warp an old adage, the town council can build a trough, but it can't make the horses drink.

Artists will create. Period. They'll find creative outlets even if it means picking wildflowers to mix into paints or erecting a stage in Dad's garage. However, art is a form of communication, so the one thing an artist must have is an audience.

If you're not an artist, that's where you come in. You can help create your culture just by showing up. ❧

**The humanities
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slack.**

Fighting for Adam and Steve:

United Way says no way to the Boy Scouts

Recently, I've been thinking about the controversy surrounding the Boy Scouts of America. Because they have chosen to ban gays from participating in the Boy Scouts program, some local United Way chapters have decided to cease giving funds to the Boy Scouts' local chapters while the national organization comes to a final judgement.

I applaud these local United Way chapters. Any organization that promotes bigotry shouldn't be given any funding. Who wants to be known as an outfit that gives money to homophobes?

This also makes folks wonder about the giver's stand on homosexuality. Are they homophobes, too? If they aren't, why are they giving money to an organization that is?

The main fear about gays being in the Boy Scouts is based on

the stereotype that all gay men are pedophiles. Allowing gays into their organization only increases the chance of young boys being molested, according to this stereotype.

I don't agree with this.

Two of my co-workers, 30-something males, have been arrested for enticing a minor for sexual pleasure. In both cases, they had been corresponding with an undercover agent online.

I knew another guy that was convicted for committing a lewd act on a minor.

In all three cases, the minor was a female.

The reason I bring this up is because most pedophiles are known to be heterosexual and not gay. Being gay does not make one a child molester.

Gay men prefer *men*—not children. Pedophiles are always surrounding themselves with children. They are almost children themselves. Ask Michael Jackson.

Even though I am against banning gays, there is one thing I have to admit troubles me. This isn't really based on a fear of gays. This is based on a fear of any strange adult sleeping in the same tent as my child. I don't think I can even trust a close friend of mine to share a tent with my child. However, I am told that adults sleep in separate tents.

Another fear about gays in the Boy Scouts is that, if exposed to this lifestyle, Scouts will grow up gay themselves.

I don't agree with this, either.

Despite what rock-n-roll star Little Richard tries to portray, being gay is not a choice. It is something you're born with. Somebody needs to tell this to Little Richard. The Lord is not going to make him straight.

Speaking of religion, some Bible thumpers say that having gays in the Boy Scouts will have Scouts thinking that homosexuality is an acceptable behavior. They claim that this can't happen because it

says in the Bible that homosexuality is a sin. Homosexuals are going to burn in hell, they say. Sodomites are the work of Satan, they exclaim. In the bible, they re-

port, it was Adam and Eve and not Adam and *Steve*.

Backward thinking like this kind of makes me happy that the Romans were throwing Christians to the lions.

I know, I know. All Christians don't behave this way. Saying all Christians are backwards Bible thumpers takes us back to saying that all gay men are pedophiles.

Backward thinking like this kind of makes me happy that the Romans were throwing Christians to the lions.

On a personal level, the only time I fear homosexuality is if I happen to wind up in

prison. My worst prison nightmare is being locked up with a big black dude named Bubba. In this nightmare, Bubba keeps calling me his Chocolate Sweet Thang.

Still, Bubba wouldn't really be a homosexual. Due to the lack of women in prison, Bubba would just be violently *adapting* to his environment.

The local United Way chapters that have denied funding have made the right choice. We can only hope the national organization makes a blanket decision to deny funding. Don't give the Boy Scouts of America a fuckin' penny. ❧

mind power



by patrick scott barnes

The Business Of Omission:

"Mommy, Were There Really Protests At The Conventions?"

by Darren Kramer

With an infinite amount of facts and events available, one need not fabricate the truth in order to create a bias. It can easily be created by focusing on certain facts or by making short mention of others.

Ideally, one would believe that it is the job and responsibility of the news media to report honestly and without bias on the most relevant of these facts and events. However, there is rarely a critical examination of the factors that influence which of these facts and events reach your television, newspaper, or magazine. That would require the media to question its own credibility, which I doubt will ever happen. I believe it is very important to start creating a public discourse on the credibility of the media. Progressive organizations, study groups, or independent media would be ideal catalysts for this.

According to Ben Haig Bagdikian's book *The Media Monopoly*, in 1993, only 20 corporations controlled all major media outlets with that number dropping every year. Currently, all but one of the top companies mentioned above have assets in excess of \$1 billion. It is interesting to note that General Electric, who owns NBC, is the second largest defense contractor for the Pentagon. This means that the same company who profits from war is also reporting it to you. This conflict of interest, largely affects the information that you receive. The question is, can a corporation that has a conflict of

interest, like GE, still give fair coverage?

There are two ways that the corporate media profits - by attracting customers (for example, magazine subscribers and television viewers) and through advertising.

The former creates the need for scandal, hence the abundance of news stories like the OJ Simpson trial or the Elian Gonzalez debacle. The dramatization of current events bolsters ratings and profits for the corporate media, and creates the need for meaningless but sensational sound bites and footage.

The latter holds the media accountable to its advertisers. Will NBC report that Shell funded the massacre of the indigenous Ogondi tribe in Nigeria in order to claim the oil-rich lands? Not before receiving a whole lot of flak or having their Shell ads pulled. It is in NBC's best interest to allow this information to fall into the void of omission if they wish to protect their profits.

Another factor to mention is the corporate media's reliance on government officials and other "experts" for information. Reporters for the corporate media have daily quotas to fill, so they often seek out steady sources for information whose credibility is not questioned due to the supposed virtue of their position. This creates scenarios in which reporters, in search of stories, hound government officials or "experts" who are frequently hired by big business or special interest groups. To meet their deadlines, local media sources, if they are not part of a news conglomerate, often get their information from the bigger media sources. According to the book *Manufacturing Consent*, by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, the Pentagon has an entire division dedicated to public information. This operation employs thousands of people and is responsible for at least \$100,000,000 of the national budget.

A recent example of how the media filters events was displayed in their coverage of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. Many Americans were not aware that large scale protests occurred outside the conventions, mainly because many major news sources chose not to cover them.

When the media was called upon to cover the events surrounding the RNC, they were faced with an extremely broad and diverse coalition of organizations who had issue with the Republican Party's policies including anarchists, socialists, and environmentalists. Even the Friends' Center, a cultural center owned and run by Quakers, served as an integral place for protesters to meet and plan their activities. The protests focused on Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush for multiple reasons. As governor of Texas, he was responsible for the most executions in one year, including the controversial execution of Shaka Sankofa (a.k.a. Gary Graham). Under Bush's leadership, Texas also ranked first in percentage of parents and children with no health insurance, fifth in people living in poverty, and 49th in environmental spending. These are but a few in a long list of statistics that show how Governor Bush prioritized corporate interests over public interests.



art by eachan



The police raid of the "Ministry of Puppetganda" was one pivotal incident surrounding the RNC protests that received little if no coverage. The Ministry of Puppetganda was the name protesters gave to the warehouse space where the activists constructed puppets. Without words, puppets, large and small, have, in previous anti-globalization protests, played integral parts in conveying messages to the media. The Philadelphia police claimed that there was "bomb-making" material in the puppet space and subsequently raided it. Bomb-making material was never found but the puppets were still seized, and later destroyed, for reasons never explained. Following the incident, the ACLU filed and won a restraining order against the Los Angeles Police Department that prevented them from making preemptive raids. Still, the message of the RNC protests suffered due to the loss of the puppets and, despite the court order, the police raided the convergence center in Los Angeles for a second time claiming that a protester had thrown something at an officer. Once again, the corporate media turned its head and ignored the facts surrounding these events. When they did ask questions, they went to the police department for answers and the police rhetoric was then reported to the public.

Even *The Philadelphia Daily News*, despite the local interest and the paper's proximity to the events, failed to provide complete and fair coverage. The cover of the August 2, 2000 issue bore the title "Hot & Heavy: How the Cops Kept Their Cool Amid the Turmoil." The inside article entitled, "Grace Under Fire" covered the highly

sensational civil disobedience, confrontations with the cops, and the damage to police property. Paragraphs were dedicated to interviews with Philadelphia Mayor John Street and Police Commissioner John Timoney. In fact, there was an entire column dedicated to covering what happened to the beloved police commissioner and his opinions on the events. Only one sentence was given to addressing the issues of the protesters.

In the same edition of *The Philadelphia Daily News* there was an editorial by Jill Porter entitled "Protests Lacking Direction". In it, Jill states "[The flag] was black: It had a white 'A' in the middle of it. And all I could think was: What the heck does that mean?" Perhaps Jill Porter should educate herself before forming an opinion, and certainly before writing an editorial in the city's newspaper. For those who don't know, the black flag is an old anarchist symbol, like the circled 'A', both of which have come to represent their ideology as well as serve as an organizational tool. Black is the color of negation, so when put to a flag, it is meant to symbolize the ideology which seeks to abolish all nation-state boundaries that divide humankind. The circled 'A' emerged around the turn of the century; its exact origins are unknown, although it is understood to represent anarchy and order, hence the 'O' surrounding the 'A'. Both are cultural symbols. Despite her self-admitted ignorance, Jill still comments, "For the most part, the sentiments expressed by the demonstrators are about fringe issues that are irrelevant"; she

(MEDIA, continued on page 50)

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The Principles of Vote-Wasting

I had an interesting discussion about politics with my mother one day. It involved my assertion that I would be voting third party this November, and I was alarmed at her outright derision of it with the words, "Well, you're wasting your vote, but okay." After realizing that her exact views on voting are shared by so many, I decided to take pen to paper (or in these enlightened times, fingers to keyboard) and tackle this strange quandary as to whether or not a vote — any vote — can truly be "wasted."

First of all, let me begin by saying that the reason I vote is not because I believe that it makes a difference in the *outcome* of an election. It doesn't, unless there's a tie. You know this and I know this, because throughout our lives we've been exposed to microcosms of democracy on countless sitcoms, children's after school specials, and CBS's *Survivor*. Even though there are several million possible permutations of vote counts that could produce a tie between the Democrats and Republicans (accounting for third party influence on the turnout,) I think it's pretty safe to say that the vote count will not have a difference of one. This is likely why many people don't vote.

I suppose I vote partly because it makes me feel good to be a part of something, even if my influence is infinitesimal (in a national election, about

0.0000007%, to be precise.) I also vote so that I can say that I did, and to provide an intellectual shield for myself against the diehard "voteheads" who vilify people for throwing away one of their many inalienable rights so egregiously.

Now then — why is voting for a third party a waste? My mother's argument is that, well, politicians are mostly power-hungry assholes. There's not a lot of room for argument in that generalization. But, said she, you're not voting for the people themselves... you're voting for the legacy of policies that they will leave for the future. With three Supreme Court justices possibly slated to leave their offices within the next presidential term, said she, we can't afford to be "wasting" our votes on third parties when such important atrocities as the potential overturn of the landmark *Roe v.*

Wade abortion case can ensue with a Republican win.

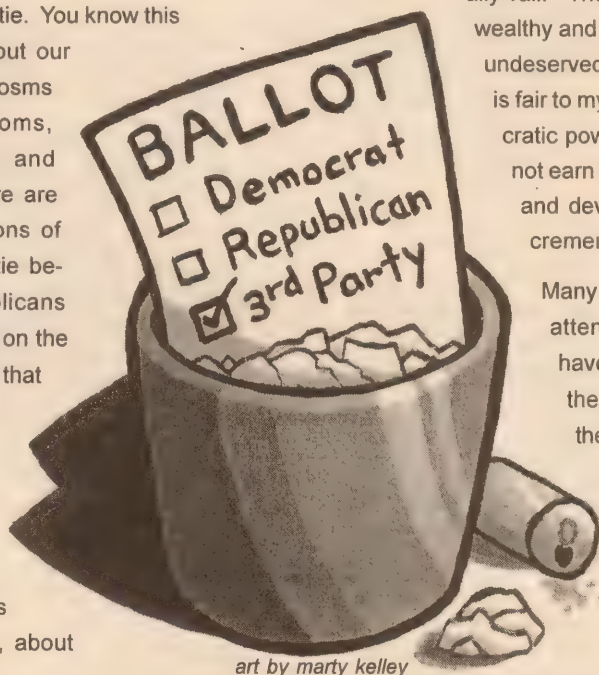
While I think there is merit in my mother's argument, it seems too much like democratic duress to me, as though Al Gore were pointing a loaded gun at a single issue, threatening to kill it if we don't vote for him. It sounds like resignation and fear, not forward thinking and inspiration. And besides, *Roe v. Wade* did manage to survive the administrations of Reagan and Bush. How'd that happen?

"Well, I'm young and idealistic," I told her.

"Hmm. Well, I'm old and practical," she retorted.

The truth of it all is that 'Republicrats' drip with all of the hollow, empty pandering and business-speak against which I continually rail. They are too mired in the interests of the wealthy and too overrated by the constant barrage of undeserved media attention, and I just don't feel it is fair to my conscience and my little piece of democratic power to reward either party for it. They do not earn my mind, heart, or vote by being ordinary and devoid of substance, promising vague, incremental, single-issue changes.

Many third party candidates *have* earned my attention and consideration, because they have interesting and profound ideas about the past, present, and future, and describe them eloquently. When I hear Harry Browne (Libertarian), John Hagelin (Reform and Natural Law), or Ralph Nader (Green) speak, I know instinctively that I am listening to great minds that have come into politics through a great, sweeping love for the world and an



art by marty kelley

honest desire to effect change. When I hear the other two guys, I think, "Oh, it's that kid from the playground that used to beat me up and take my lunch money."

If all of this still doesn't ring true to you, consider the following Ralph Nader interview excerpt from his campaign website (votenader.org):

Bay Guardian: But if I think it's a close race, what do you tell these people? For example, people who say voting for Nader is going to elect Bush?

Nader: Why are you legitimizing what you are already admitting? That the two parties are going downhill and every four years they get worse. And because you think one is not as bad as the other, quite as bad as the other, why legitimize the downward slide?

Whoomp, there it is! While I won't endorse Nader, I truly believe that there can be a bloodless revolution against the demons of our time who seek to sap our wills and skate by on phoniness and bought exposure. It may not happen this year, but every vote against the two-headed monster is a shout out – a wake up call that there is a growing resurgence of populist empathy (and not that bogus populism that Gore espouses.) That is not, a million times *not*, a waste of a vote, and I shall truly relish in being part of that. «



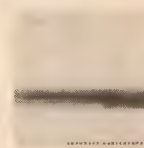
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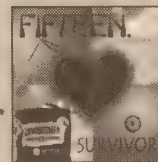
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Presidential candidates' things to do:

✓ Address the "Black Community"

by Adam Finley

I was thinking about George Washington the other day. I mean, how I never really knew the guy. I've read stories about him, I've seen pictures of him, I know he had a wife named Martha, I know he was a general during the Revolutionary War, I know he and Abraham Lincoln shared the same birthday which fell on President's Day and that they would get free meals at Denny's for this very reason.

A lot has been written about Lincoln and Washington, but can we really believe what we read? I quote, from a dollar bill I have lying next to me:

"I83887533E."

For all we know, this could be an out and out lie. If we accept "I83887533E," what stops us from accepting something like J99527118F? Is it enough to simply have George's smiling visage next to this statement? I know George has gone down in history as an honest man, but let's not forget it takes five Georges to equal one Abraham, and a whole bunch of Abrahams to equal a gaggle of Georges. Fully understanding this concept requires an uncanny grasp of economics, so let's just say you can chop down a lot of cherry trees, but they ain't strong enough to build a log cabin, if you get my meaning.

Anyway, it was Lincoln who freed the slaves. After the Civil War ended he actually ran around the South with a cutting torch and a hydrogen tank strapped to his back, cutting open shackles and humming the Imperial Margarine theme before moving on to the next slave. The entire process took well over six hours.

Some may disagree with me, but they are wrong. Lincoln did free the slaves. Ask anybody. If you took a poll, such as the following:

Who freed the slaves?

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. Jesus

it would prove, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that polls are a waste of time, except during an election year.

If you're a presidential candidate, it's good to mention Abraham Lincoln when addressing the black community. I'm not sure where this "black community" is located, since black people seem to be pretty spread out across the country, but for the sake of argument, we'll assume they're talking about central Kansas.

So let's say you're giving a speech to the NAACP or some such organization. Your speech consultant is preparing you for the address.

Consultant: One word: Rhetoric.

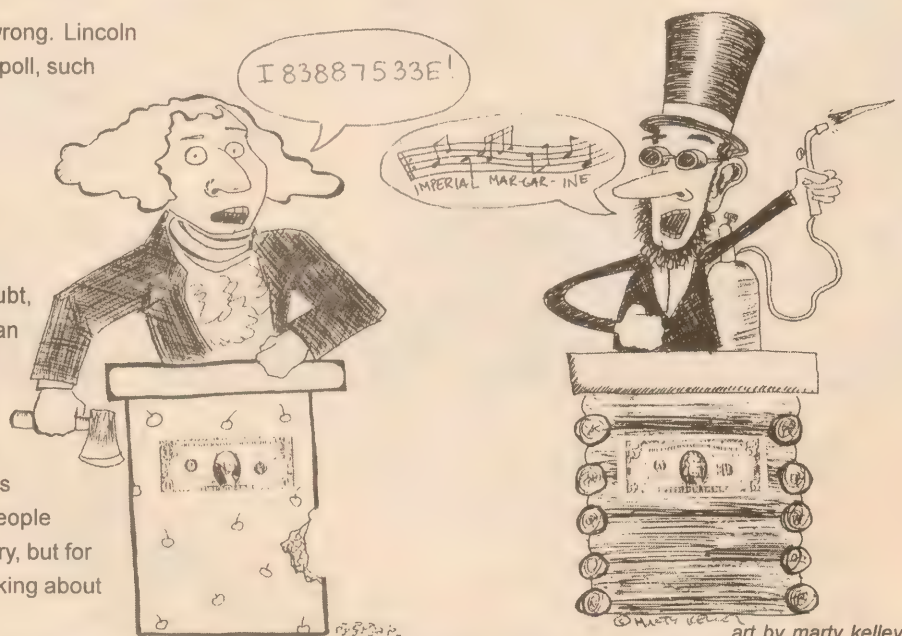
Candidate: What?

Consultant: Rhetoric. These people love rhetoric. They all come a runnin' for the great taste o' rhetoric! Yee haw! (Mounts a donkey and rides off into the sunset.)

Now you're ready, using amazing historical accuracy, to address the black community:

"Hello. I am of the same party as Abraham Lincoln, who freed all of your ancestors. If you vote for the other guy it means you like being slaves. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to kill a few more minutes here while my cohorts allow more crack to infiltrate the inner cities so the Drug Czar can keep his job. I'll fill up these remaining minutes by humming the Imperial Margarine theme as Lincoln did all those years ago..."

The moral of this is that not just anyone can be a white president. It takes someone who can embrace generalizations with the same rigor and zeal as George Washington, who, all those years ago, chopped down a cherry tree and then threw it across the Potomac, signaling the end of the Boston Tea Party, a watershed in black history. ❧

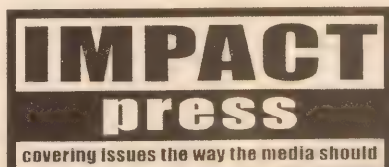


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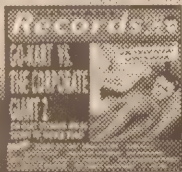
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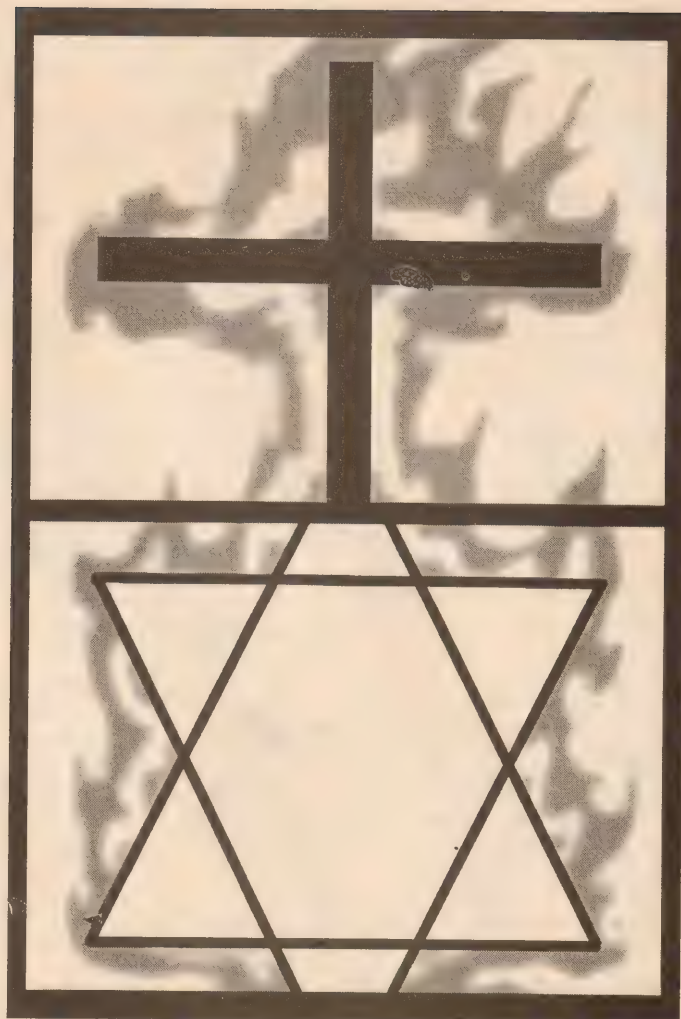


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Thou Shall Not Kill:

Understanding Religious Wars

by Morris Sullivan



art by eachean

In June, rebels in Fiji took hostage 27 members of the island nation's government. The rebels' spokesman claimed to be giving the hostages, who included the deposed Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry, lessons in Christianity. The prime minister is a Hindu.

In the Philippines, hostages grabbed from a school by militant Muslims included 22 children and a Catholic priest. The extremists claim to have beheaded two of them so far.

Religious identity has been constantly present in the antagonisms that have for centuries pitted Balkan neighbor against neighbor, with Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Western Christians struggling for power.

The current phase of the conflict in Sudan began in 1983, when a group of rebels sought a new government—a democratic, secular government that does not discriminate on religious grounds. Sudan's power currently rests with a non-compromising Islamic scholar; the government has unleashed terror on both Christians and Muslims who oppose its fundamentalist policies.

Most wars today, it seems, are civil wars in which one religious group oppresses another. Religion, we tend to believe, purports to bring inner—and outer—peace. It seems contradictory, then, that religion should provide the source for so much conflict. It might be easy for a westerner to blame “those Muslims” or “the Catholics” for the religious intolerance that fuels modern religious warfare. However, the conflicts are far more complex than they may appear on the surface, and the solutions are far less readily apparent than we would like to believe.

Today's civil wars differ from those in Vietnam and Korea, in which the nations were divided along geographic and political lines—the communist North against the Republican south, for example, and even from America's civil war, dividing the Abolitionist North against the slave-owning South. Now, civil wars are likely to be fought neighbor-against-neighbor, the Orthodox Christian against the Muslim next door, for example.

Since the dawn of European civilization, the Judeo-Christian world seems to have been at war. The Crusades killed countless Christians and Muslims as Europe wrestled for control of the Holy Land. The conflict continued as Turks made inroads into Europe, and when that tide was finally stemmed, Christians warred against Christians as the Reformation threatened Catholicism. When Israel was finally made a state, of course, that began a series of wars and battles that began almost from the first day of Israel's existence. Islam and Hinduism battled over India and Bangladesh. And now Protestants fight Catholics in Ireland, Muslims fight Jews in the Middle East, and Christians and Muslims kill one another in Sudan, Kosovo, and Jakarta.

We filter our information about our own and other cultures to suit our images of ourselves. Thus, as most Americans are Christian, at least in our ethnic background, we tend to paint for ourselves a somewhat self-serving, modernised, enlightened portrait of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Americans often think of Christianity in terms of its "love thy neighbor" and "turn the other cheek" philosophies. By contrast, when we think of Muslims, we often think of the term "jihad", the holy war that, we assume, feeds the flames of terrorism and civil war. Since the Crusades, the bloody battles between European Christians and Muslim Turks, we have seen Islam as a formidable and barbaric opponent.

However, as Joseph Campbell so conclusively points out in *Myths to Live By*, the aggressiveness that characterizes modern Islam has its roots in the warrior mythologies of the Aryans and Semites, as well as those of ancient Greece—the same mythologies that are shared by Christianity and Judaism.

"The two greatest works of war mythology in the west," Campbell says, "are the *Iliad* and the Old Testament." And, he continues, the war mythology of the Old Testament is in many ways far less forgiving than that of the Greeks—"when we turn from the *Iliad* and Athens to Jerusalem and the Old Testament [we find] a single-minded single deity with his sympathies forever on one side. And the enemy, accordingly, no matter who it may be, is handled...pretty much as though he were subhuman: not a 'Thou' but an 'It.'"

Let's not forget that Christianity is rooted in Judaism, and that the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament was supposed to be a great king who would lead Israel to victory. Therefore, the same God who urges us to "love our neighbor" also tells us (in Deuteronomy) "when the Lord your God gives [your enemies] over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them and show them no mercy."

This jealous God, it seems, fears that making peace and showing

mercy to one's enemies will ultimately "turn your sons from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and He would destroy you utterly."

How does one reconcile that command of the Judeo Christian God, "Thou shall not kill", against His demand to "utterly destroy" one's enemies? For the answer to that question, one should look at the origins of both religion and war.

Humans are predators. Like all predators, we are territorial. Like lions and hyenas, we hunt in packs; if we're talking about a primitive human society, we call our packs "tribes". If we're talking about contemporary society, we call our pack a "nation."

The purpose of the tribe is to manage and exploit resources which we could not manage and exploit as individuals. Like technology, the tribe makes it possible for us to extend ourselves beyond our own capabilities: just as the weapon extends our hands beyond

Today's civil wars
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wars, not really
about ideology -
no group of people
really, at their
core, give a damn
about the ideology
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the grasp of our arm, thus making it possible for us to kill bigger game, the tribe permits us to survive more easily and comfortably. If you examine any society, you'll see that it battles other societies for control of resources, just as any two predators will fight for control of a territory.

Every society has laws. Before societies organized themselves into states, laws were provided by religion. Those laws are necessary for the orderly management of the society; they evolve mainly to suit the particular tribe; and they apply to the individuals within that tribe. Members of other tribes don't count; the laws are not intended to protect them, because they are competitors for our own tribes resources. Therefore, when Jehovah commanded, "Thou shall not kill," what He meant was "Thou shall not kill members of your own tribe."

Today's civil wars are, like all wars, not really about ideology—no group of people really, at their core, give a damn about the ideology of another group. Rather, in one way or another, these apparently "religious" wars are about the control of resources—of land, the oil underneath the land, or the freedom to make money.

The warring groups, however, organize along apparently religious lines because the "tribes" have to share territories. Religion serves largely as a means of de-humanizing the other tribe. As we've seen with the de-humanizing of the Vietnamese, the Communists, Native Americans, Aboriginal Australians, and so on, it's far easier to kill a person when we can manage to see him as somehow less than human. What better way to de-humanize another person than to point out that he doesn't even worship a "real" god, like we do?

And so, all over the world, people battle for control of limited resources, each side convinced that their atrocities are justified because "God is on our side."

Most modern governments have learned that they can reap more benefits through cooperation than war. Religious ideology, unfortunately, has not evolved the way government has over the last several centuries. Rather, much of religion holds tenaciously to its ancient—and now counter-productive—ideology.

There are, of course, no easy solutions to this problem—no pro-

nouncement that will put an end to religious warring. If the civil wars are to ever end, several things must eventually take place. First, world leaders must continue to insist that freedom to choose one's form of worship is a fundamental human right. Second, religious leaders must come into the modern world—they must realize that cooperation will be more beneficial than strife, and take the stance that peace, freedom, and survival take precedence over ideology. As Pius XII averred, "Nothing is lost with peace; all can be lost with war."

Most important, though, we must have economic equality. During deliberations in Milan over the situation in Sudan which included professors in political science and African history, human rights advocates, and representatives of the conflicting groups, consensus arose that the war was much more than a religious one—that religion has merely been manipulated to fuel the fire.

The best solution to come from the conference, according to Altercifi Ahmed Kormino, the Deputy Director of the Sudanese Embassy in Rome, re-routing profits from the sale of Sudanese oil would help end the strife. "Why is there no war in the USA, Canada, or Italy?" he asked. Earnings from oil exports could be used to improve infrastructure, fight ignorance and disease, and minimize infant mortality. In comparison to their current conditions, those on both sides of the Sudanese conflict could become wealthy, "and, as we all know, rich people don't fight." ❧

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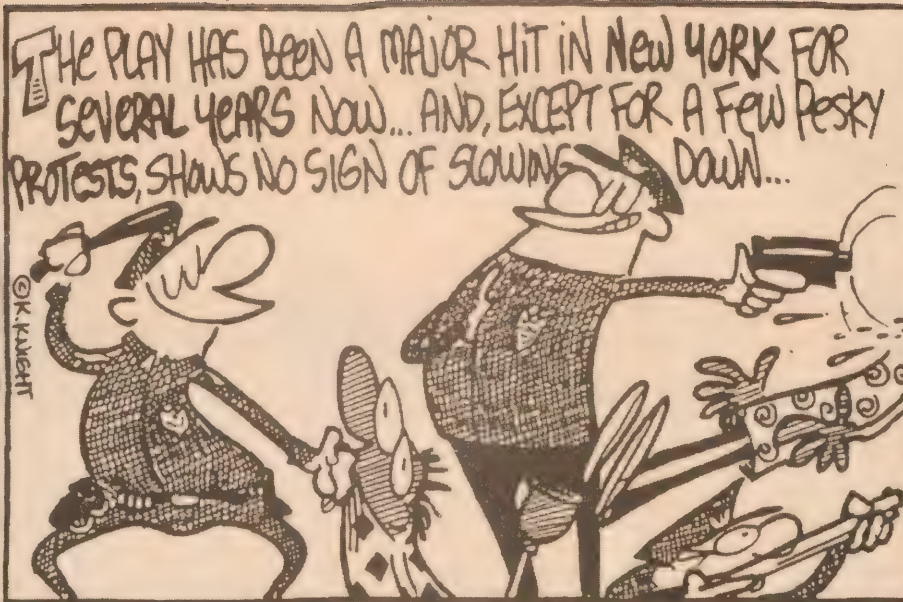


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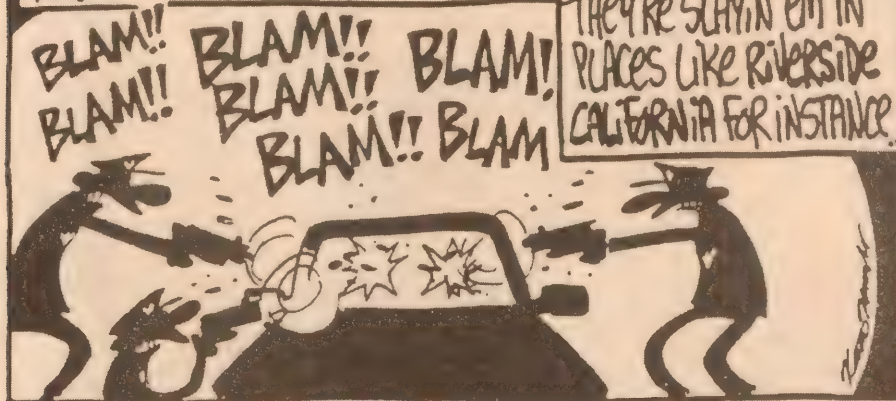
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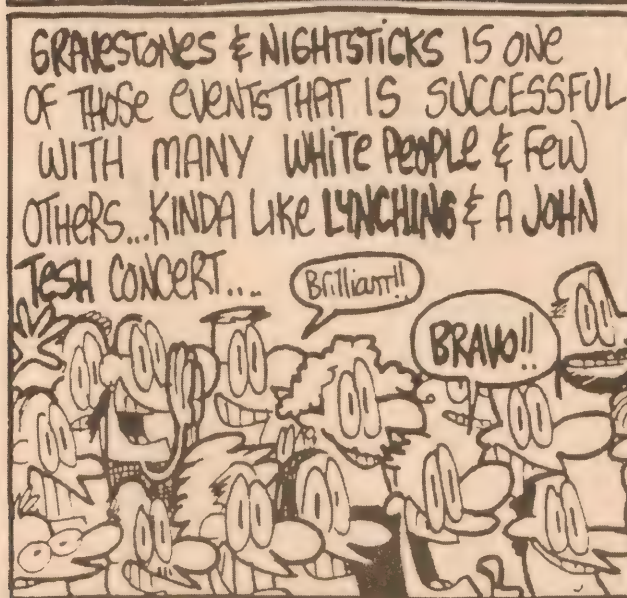
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For your health or their profit?

By Edward R. Rosick, DO, MPH

The shadow relationship between government and global vaccine manufacturers



Primum non nocere. An ancient Latin saying, generally attributed to Hippocrates, the acknowledged founder of Western medicine. Translated, it reads First, Do No Harm. This simple but powerful statement was to be the guiding principle of medicine throughout the ages, from the time Greek gods ruled over the earth to when humankind was unraveling the genetic code of life. Yet as we all know, especially those of us trained as physicians, it is an admonition that time and time again has been thrown aside. Examples of physicians' indifference abound, from the treatment of people with poisonous compounds of mercury and arsenic during the middle ages, to the Tuskegee study, lasting from 1932 to 1972, where three hundred and ninety-nine black sharecroppers were studied like lab rats as syphilis racked their bodies and brains, even when safe antibiotic treatments were available.

Many people would say that the above examples are relics of a myopic past. They would point out that today we live on the cusp of a new era, a time when the promise of future cures for everything from cancer to AIDS seems real. They would point with pride at the use of vaccines to eradicate smallpox and make the fear of polio and measles all but footnotes in the medical history books.

It has been over 200 years since a British physician, Edward Jenner,

used an eight-year old boy to test his theory of whether or not infecting someone with a relatively benign disease, cowpox, could protect one against a potentially lethal disease, smallpox. Ever since Jenner's risky experiment (at least for the boy), his proponents have touted vaccinations as a way to rid the world of the diseases that have plagued humans since the dawn of time. Still, there are those who are skeptical of the near miracles that vaccine proponents tout. Skeptics counter that the decreases seen in communicable diseases such as smallpox and measles are as much, if not more, as a result of such mundane advances as public sanitation, purified drinking water, and better nutrition. There are also those who have resented and resisted government attempts to inoculate themselves or their children with vaccines they believed to be harmful. But their voices were silenced in a 1905 landmark case (*Jacobson v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts*) when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that for the greater good, an individual's right to refuse vaccinations could be swept away. Because of this ruling, it is now standard medical protocol mandated by state law for children to have received up to thirty-two vaccinations before they can attend public school. If the current research in new vaccines continues, it is predicted that soon, children will be subjected to up to fifty shots before they began kindergarten.

On the surface, the vaccine skeptics and dissenters appear to be nothing more than another lunatic fringe, composed of right-wing extremists and left-wing anarchists spouting vitriolic nonsense. However, a closer look reveals many of them to be sincere, well-trained professionals, including nurses and physicians. Through careful thought and research, they have come to question the claims of almost perfect safety for vaccines and the industry that produces them. Vaccine skeptics also view with trepidation the vaguely incestuous relationship between the U.S. government and the multinational pharmaceutical corporations that control the multibillion-dollar vaccine market.

Through takeovers and mergers, three global corporations—Merck, Aventis, and American Health Products—have emerged, for all practical purposes, to control the manufacture and marketing of vaccines around the world. The vaccine market is one of the most lucrative endeavors of the pharmaceutical industry, estimated to reap profits of at least seven billion dollars this year, and up to twelve billion or more annually by the year 2005. This growth shows no signs of slowing down, and in fact, since 1986, profits from vaccines have increased at least ten to fifteen percent every year. Much of this has been paid for by patients: from 1986 to 1997, the average cost to immunize a child with all vaccines mandated by law has increased 243 percent.

The year 1986 proved to be a pivotal year in the life of the vaccine industry. At the time, profits were stagnant, and many companies were seriously considering getting out of the business altogether. Claiming that their profits were being squeezed out of them by frivolous lawsuits, vaccine manufacturers were given a great gift by the U.S. Congress — damn near full protection from any legal action arising from harm or death caused by their vaccines. At the companies behest, a system known as the Federal Vaccine Injury Compensation Program was set up at the taxpayers' expense to compensate anyone harmed or killed by vaccines, the very same vaccines which the taxpayers and their children are required by law to receive. It is a lawsuit-safe, profit ensuring system that other manufacturers only dream of.

This 1986 ruling was a shot in the arm, so to speak, for the pharmaceutical companies, and has fueled a meteoric rise in their profits from vaccine sales ever since. It has also fueled a slew of new vaccines reaching the market, with 200 more in the pipeline for release in the coming years. Vaccine proponents see this as wonderful news; vaccine skeptics tend to be much more cautious, if not outright alarmed. To them, this is just another example of drugs, in this case, vaccines, being pushed on an uninformed public by multinational corporations out to maximize their coffers.

To gain access to the lucrative U.S. market, vaccines and all other drugs must be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) also play in a role in the approval of vaccines through the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). This committee examines data submitted by vaccine manufacturers, holds discussions, and then votes whether or not to recommend that the FDA approve the vaccine for public use. To quote directly from a report on the FDA web page entitled *How FDA Works to Ensure Vaccine Safety*: "FDA advisory committees [the ACIP] are groups of experts outside government that review data and issues associated with products and recommend what action the agency should take. . . Committee recommendations are not binding on the FDA, but the agency considers them carefully when deciding whether to license a vaccine for marketing." What this FDA report fails to mention is that members of the ACIP are often nominated by pharmaceutical companies whose products are being looked at by the ACIP. While members of the ACIP are no longer permitted to directly vote on issues regarding a company they have financial ties to, they can actively participate in discussions and talks, thus allowing them to influence the recommendations ultimately made to the FDA.

Since 1986, the development, production, and sale of vaccines has changed from a minor part of pharmaceutical sales to one of a hugely profitable multibillion dollar industry and has become a guaranteed money maker for global pharmaceutical companies.

Well into the 1990's, the use of the oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV), a vaccine made from live polio virus, was recommended by the ACIP. OPV (manufactured by Wyeth Lederle, which is a subsidiary of American Health Products) was endorsed and pushed by the FDA because of its ability to produce what is known as herd immunity. Herd immunity comes about through the shedding of the still partially living poliovirus in feces. Because of this, it is possible that people other than those directly receiving the vaccine could also ingest the poliovirus, albeit without their knowledge (the virus can sometimes survive through the sewage treatment process), and become immune to polio. Unfortunately, OPV, besides producing herd immunity, can also cause polio itself. OPV was the known cause of 119 cases of polio in the U.S. between 1980 and 1994. There were no cases of naturally-occurring or "wild-type" polio during that time, since polio was eradicated in the U.S. in 1979. A furor arose in the vaccine skeptic's camp because during that time period there was in fact an alternative vaccine: Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV), which is made from inactivated, or dead, poliovirus,

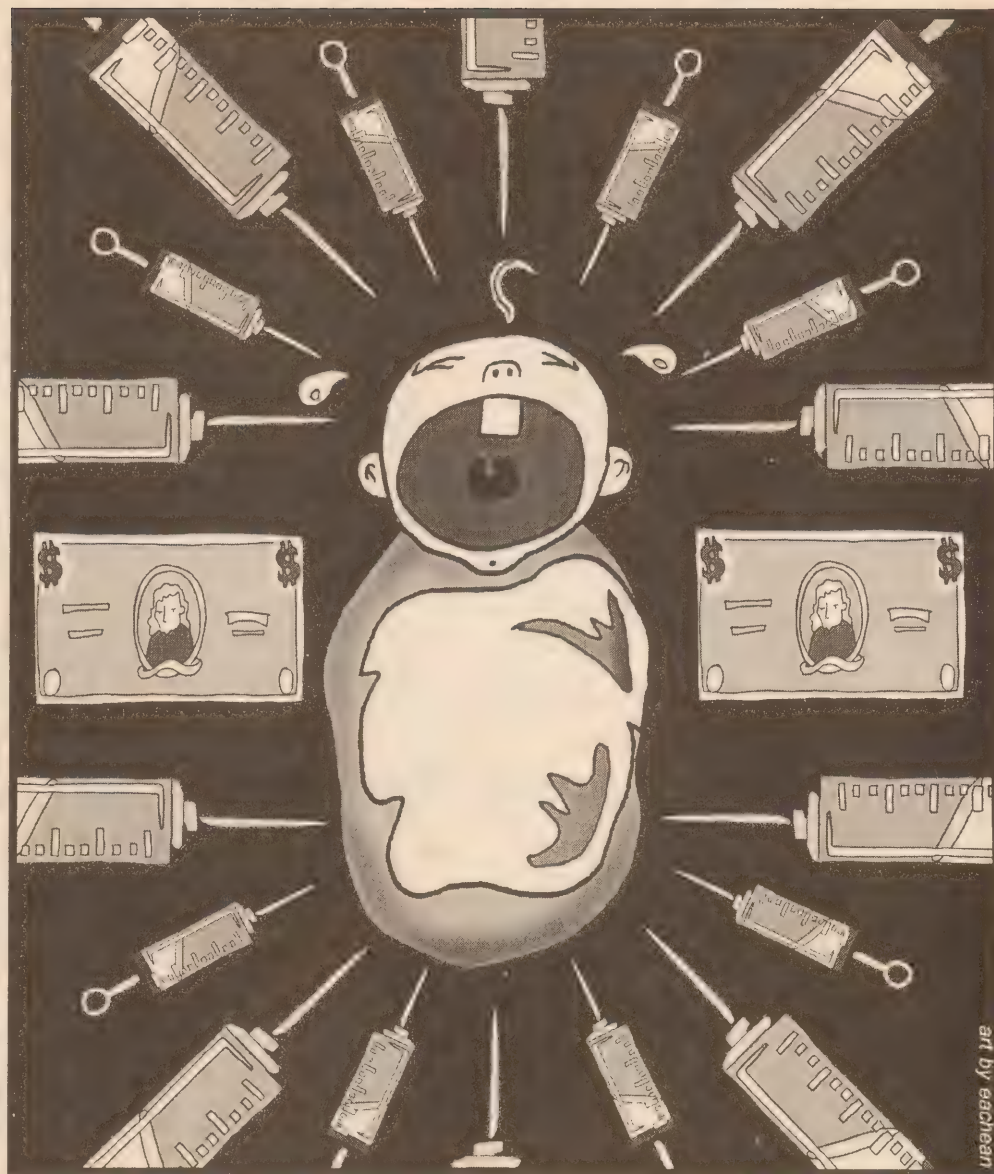
cannot cause polio in those who receive it, or anyone else. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, there was clamor to switch from OPV to IPV. In 1995, 16 years after polio had been vanquished from the Western Hemisphere, a CDC advisory committee met to discuss whether or not to continue to recommend the use of OPV over IPV. After deliberation, the committee voted to recommend continuing the use of OPV, knowing full well that their recommendation meant that they were subjecting unsuspecting citizens to a deadly disease.

It was revealed later that five out of the nine members of that CDC committee had financial ties to the polio vaccine manufacturers.

In 1998, a new vaccine called RotaShield was introduced to the U.S. market. Rotashield, also produced by Wyeth Lederle, was said to protect infants against rotavirus, a disease which can cause diarrhea, sometimes severe, in young infants and children. Rotashield had sailed through the FDA approval process, getting a full recommendation from the ACIP. It was also heartily recommended for routine use in all infants by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

A year after its introduction, Rotashield was voluntarily withdrawn from the market, following numerous reports of a condition called intussusception in infants that were given the vaccine. Intussusception is an extremely painful, sometimes fatal process whereby the infant's intestines become twisted and obstructed. By September of 1999, there had been 99 reported cases of intussusception in infants given RotaShield. Two of those infants died. Later investigation of the vaccine revealed that there had been an increased risk of intussusception seen in pre-market trials, yet this information was not required to be given to parents whose infants were given the vaccine. It was also discovered that three out of the five members of an FDA advisory committee voting to approve the vaccine in December of 1997 had ties to pharmaceutical companies developing rotavirus vaccines. Six out of the ten members on a 1998 committee that developed guidelines for giving the vaccine also had ties to pharmaceutical companies engaged in rotavirus vaccine development.

Vaccine skeptics claimed that the rotavirus debacle shed a reveal-



ing light on the suspicious relationship between the multinational pharmaceutical industry and the government. However, vaccine proponents actually tried to spin the rotavirus vaccine failure into a success story. They claimed that the withdrawal of the vaccine from the market showed that the surveillance system of the FDA, known as the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), alerted public health authorities in a timely manner about problems with RotaShield, although not so timely as to prevent the deaths of two innocent infants.

For other vaccines, the VAERS seems strangely to have little relevance in discontinuing, or even investigating, the vaccine. From July 1, 1990, to October 21, 1998, the VAERS received 17,497 reports of adverse reactions to the hepatitis B vaccine. The hepatitis B vaccine was introduced with much fanfare in 1986 as the first recombinant vaccine on the US market. The hepatitis B vaccine was developed by Chiron, which subsequently licensed it to Merck. Even with the huge number of adverse reactions reported, the vaccine continues to be pushed on the public by government

edicts. In 42 states, it is now law that children entering grade school be vaccinated against hepatitis B, with State health boards recommending that infants be given the three dose schedule at 2, 4, and 6 months of age. Vaccine skeptics point out that in 1996, only 54 cases of Hepatitis B were reported in babies less than one year old. During that same time, there were 1,080 reports of adverse reactions in infants less than a year old, with 47 deaths. In spite of these grisly and frightening facts, the FDA continues to extol the virtues of the hepatitis B vaccine, and has no plans for any major studies on the possible myriad of side effects of the vaccine. It also has failed to answer questions concerning the rationale of using a vaccine for a disease that is primarily transmitted by sharing needles or unsafe sex to two month-old infants, most of which do not engage in such risky activities.

Since 1986, the development, production, and sale of vaccines has changed from a minor part of pharmaceutical sales to one of a hugely profitable multibillion dollar industry and has become a guaranteed money maker for global pharmaceutical companies. These companies are protected by government laws against lawsuits and the vaccines are mandated by government law for every child in this country. The companies' studies of the safety profile of vaccines rests in the hands of men and women who are often part of the very industry they are appointed to investigate. Even if there is no definite proof of harm from vaccines, the government is obligated to put significantly more money into studies of the safety profile of vaccines, and thoroughly investigate the claims made by thousands of ordinary citizens of harm done to themselves and their children by vaccines. It would also be comforting to see such national medical organizations like the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) show some intestinal fortitude by demanding that the CDC and ACIP advisory members have no financial ties to vaccine manufacturers; that parents are given all warnings and possible side effects of vaccines that are required for their children; and that full and definitive scientific analysis of the risks and benefits of vaccines are made top priority by the FDA. Only by taking these very needed steps can the AMA, the AOA, and the tens of thousands of physicians they represent heed the still relevant words spoken by Hippocrates many years ago. ❧

Make an IMPACT

The FDA on vaccine safety
http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/095_vacc.html

National Vaccine Information Center
<http://www.909shot.com>

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<http://www.vaccines.net>

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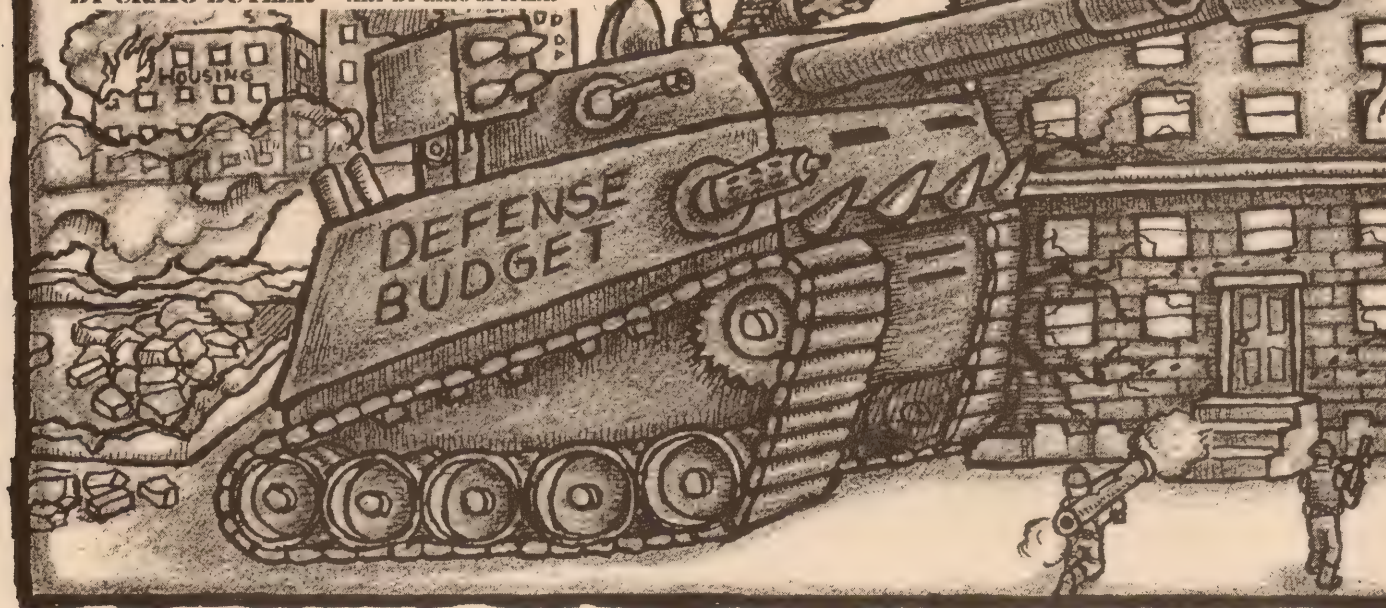
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ATTACKING AMERICA'S GREATEST ENEMY: THE BLOATED MILITARY BUDGET

BY CRAIG BUTLER ART BY ERIC SPITZER



"Every gun that is made, every warship that is launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed."

A quick quiz to start us off. Which of the following commie-radical-hippie-peaceniks is responsible for the above quote about the dangers of a bloated military: Bill Clinton, Ralph Nader, or Dwight Eisenhower?

Although Nader is certainly committed to the idea expressed in the quote, and though Clinton would claim to be, the words themselves come from no one but Ike. He even went on to say that when money is wasted on unneeded military expenses, the world is sacrificing more than money, "it is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists and the hopes of its children."

Of course, most Americans agree that they want a strong military. But most Americans don't realize just how much money we spend on our military - or just what we get for that money.

When Bill Clinton presented his budget for fiscal year (FY) 2001, he earmarked some \$305 billion for defense, roughly \$836 million per day. Total discretionary spending in Clinton's budget is \$622 billion - which means that the military accounts for 49% of next year's discretionary spending as proposed by the President. (Discretionary spending is that portion of the budget that is voted on

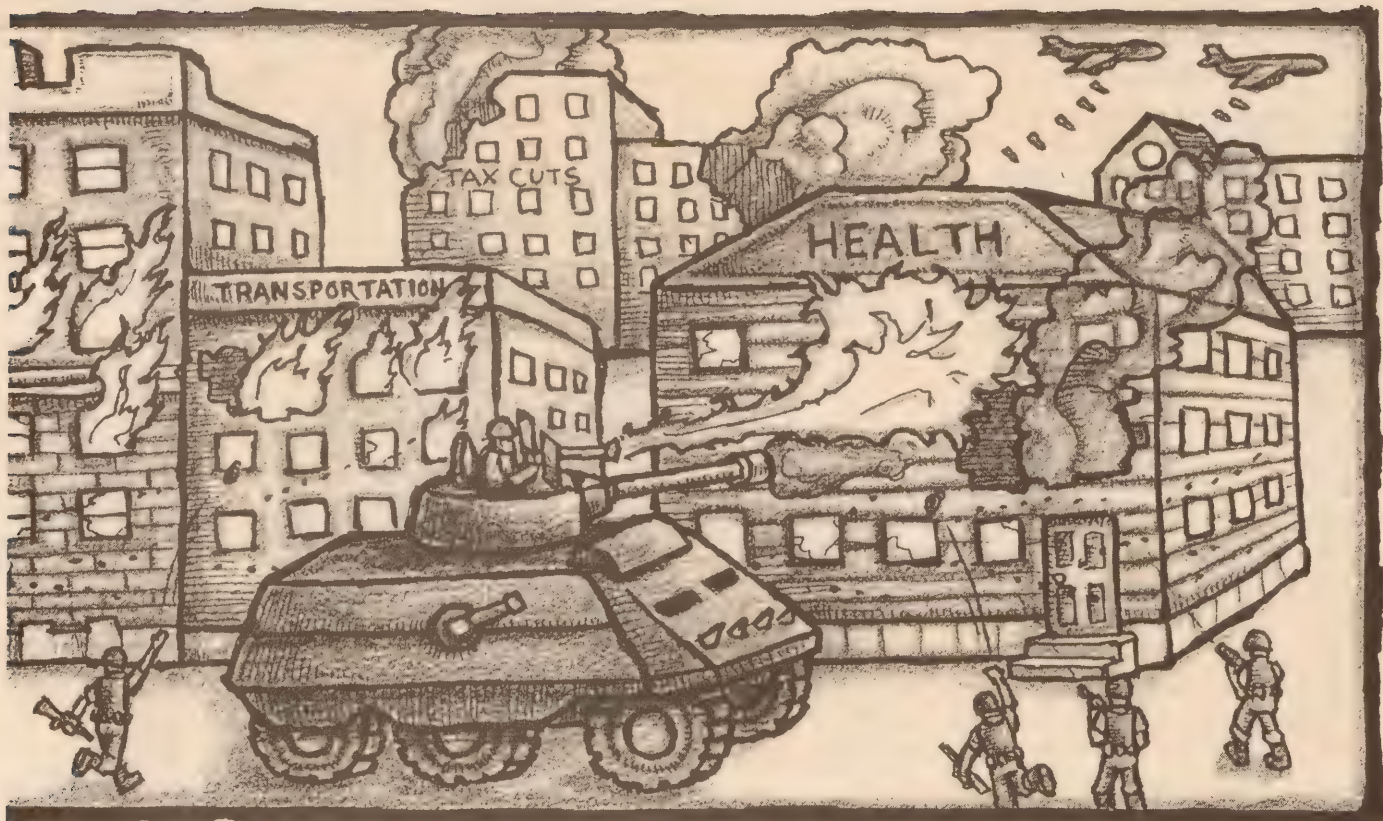
annually, as opposed to Social Security, debt payments, Medicare, etc.) By contrast, Clinton proposed \$42 billion for education (6.8% of discretionary funds), \$35 billion for health (5.6%), and \$15 billion for transportation (2.4%).

These numbers, by the way, don't tell the whole story. These figures will undoubtedly be changed by the time the House and Senate get finished with them. For example, the President's budget includes a 36% increase in education and a 59% increase in housing, increases which will likely be trimmed, if not severely cut.

Nor will the military budget remain intact, although the GOP-lead Congress will want to INCREASE spending beyond the \$305 billion Clinton has proposed. They have already added over \$3.6 billion to the Defense appropriations bill, most (if not all) of which is "pork," or money spent on items which the Pentagon doesn't want, doesn't need and didn't request. (More on that later.)

So we spend a hell of a lot of money on defense. Doesn't everyone?

Well, actually, no. No other country spends money on their military like we do. No one even comes close. Russia, with the second-largest military budget, will lay out roughly \$55 billion for defense next year - about 18% of what we will spend. As a matter of fact, our military budget is larger than the combined military budgets of the next twelve nations. And none of those next twelve nations listed are one of the seven "rogue nations" (or "states of concern," as they've recently been rechristened) that are considered enemies of the U.S. (Our defense budget, by the way, is twenty-two times



the combined amount of money those seven nations will spend. It is more than 50 times greater than Iran's, which has the largest budget of the seven.)

Defenders of the military budget, paradoxically enough, claim that we spend too LITTLE on defense. They claim that under Clinton the budget has been slashed drastically; that our "readiness" has declined substantially; that our forces are weak because we don't pay our soldiers enough; and that we must constantly be purchasing new equipment because the current equipment is old and obsolete.

It is true that Clinton has reduced the military budget, but the reduction is "drastic" only in comparison with the excesses of the Reagan era when the military budget ballooned out of control (causing the National Debt crisis and changing the U.S. from the world's largest creditor nation to the world's largest debtor.) And in fact, Clinton's budget is still 90% of what we averaged over the life of the Cold War (in real dollars) - despite the fact that the Cold War justification for such huge expenditures no longer exists.

The "readiness" argument also does not hold water and is based upon a belief that we spend too little on O&M (operations and maintenance). In fact, there is no reason to assume that readiness rates are related to spending. Under Reagan, they dropped between 1980 and 1984, despite the increased monetary support they received. But even if there is a relation, on a per capita basis, we are spending 10% more than we did at the height of the 1980s build-up.

As far as the issue of pay goes, an entering recruit with only a high school diploma earns \$22,000 per year currently, plus such benefits as free health care, which beats what you'd get folding trousers at GapKids. Career officers often pull down salaries over \$100,000. And the FY 2000 and 2001 budgets contain a 9% across-the-board base pay increase. More importantly, while politicians like to claim that increased military budgets are necessary to provide better compensation for enlistees, the vast majority of such increases go to procuring, maintaining or improving weapons and equipment.

What about old and obsolete equipment? Well, of course there are instances where a piece of equipment has served its purpose and must be replaced. More often, however, simple maintenance or upgrading is all that is required rather than replacement. Think of it this way: If you have a personal computer that works just fine and has many years of life left in it, do you chuck it out the window and buy a whole new system just because a new version of Windows comes on the market?

So our military budget is too big. What's an appropriate size? That's a question that is certainly open to debate. Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities (BLSP), an organization which has devoted a lot of time and money to considering this question, believes that \$40 billion could be safely cut right away. Lawrence Korb, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Reagan administration, believes that a \$225 billion military budget - \$80 billion less than the current budget - would be sufficient. Bill Hartung of the World Policy Institute, believes that the budget could be

reduced by up to \$100 billion per annum.

Jack Shanahan, a retired Admiral who heads BLSP's Military Advisory Council, notes that almost half of the proposed \$40 billion cut could come merely from reducing our stockpile of nuclear weapons from 12,000 - enough to destroy every major city in the world twelve times over - to "a still insane level of 1,000." Korb details very specific cuts which would still leave us with a force of 2 million men and women. And Hartung makes the case that taking into consideration our real needs in the context of the real world (e.g., the current and potential contributions of our allies, a policy of conflict prevention, the viability of the "two war" strategy, etc.) would enable us to trim the budget as needed without endangering security.

The viability of the "two war" strategy is key to remaking our military budget. Essentially, this strategy states that the United States must be ready to fight two full-scale wars at any one time. But "the two wars argument is a Trojan Horse," states Maurice Paprin, Co-Chair of the Fund for New Priorities in America. "It's an attempt to pull the wool over the public's eyes. We have never encountered such a situation before in the history of our country. Look at the last fifty years. Korea didn't overlap with Vietnam, and Vietnam didn't overlap with the Persian Gulf. But without the two wars scenario, there is no way for the Pentagon to justify its obscene budgets."

Paprin's argument is supported by Merrill McPeak, Air Force Chief

of Staff during the Persian Gulf War, who says that the "two war strategy is just a marketing device to justify a high budget." Even Colin Powell, who created the strategy, acknowledged at the time that he was "running out of enemies." Korb counters that, even if the two war strategy is accepted, the budget he proposes would provide every bit as much combat capability as the two war strategy demands. "Besides," Paprin adds, "the Pentagon is essentially assuming that the United States would be fighting this war single-handedly, whereas a more realistic assumption is that we would be part of a multi-national effort" in any conflict in which we become engaged.

Interestingly, there's reason to believe that the budget could be reduced significantly if only the Pentagon were held to the same standards of efficiency that apply to the rest of the country. For example, over a 10-year period (1987-1997), the Pentagon spent \$43 billion that it claims it simply cannot account for. It overstocked \$41 billion worth of equipment, such as a quantity of camouflage screen systems sufficient to last 159 years - even though they are scheduled for replacement in 2003. And, as BLSP points out, it routinely makes such overpayments as \$640 for a toilet seat, \$75 for a 57-cent screw, \$2,043 for a nut, \$660 for an ashtray, and \$1,118 for "a plastic cap that goes over the end of a stool leg."

And then there's "pork," which as I indicated earlier is money that the Senate and Congress throw at the Pentagon for things it doesn't want, doesn't need and didn't request. So why do they do this? Simple - because the money goes to the individual Senator or Representative's home district. That's why since 1978 Congress has purchased 256 C-130 transport planes (cost in 1999: about \$80 million per plane), despite the fact that the military asked for only five. Those planes are built and/or maintained in the home states of Senate Majority leader Trent Lott and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. (Pork is not limited to Republicans, of course. For example, Senator Daniel Inouye's home state of Hawaii benefitted from unwanted add-ons to 1999's military budget to the tune of \$258 million.)

Of course, there's another reason politicians are forever increasing the military budget: the military contractors, who are extremely generous in making campaign donations to those elected officials who feed them such lucrative deals. From 1991 to 1997, defense companies contributed \$32.3 million to candidates and parties (as compared to the tobacco industry's \$26.9 million during the same period). A 1999 report also found that over a two-year period the six top defense contractors spent \$51 million on lobbying activities, unrelated to direct political donations. Increasingly in contemporary America, money equals power. More and more this results in our military strategy being determined not by what is best for the country's defense but by what is best for military contractors' pocketbooks.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the current push to create a National Missile Defense (NMD) system. Reagan first advanced this idea with his Strategic Defense Initiative, often referred to at the time as "Star Wars." Although it was shot down in the 1980's, it has refused to die, with Congress still providing annual funding for the development of a missile defense program to protect us





From 1991 to 1997, defense companies contributed \$32.3 million to candidates and parties (as compared to the tobacco industry's \$26.9 million during the same period).

from strikes by other countries. The current version, NMD or "Son of Star Wars," has absolutely nothing going for it from a defense point-of-view.

The basic premise behind NMD is that we would install a huge number of missiles at strategic points around the world, creating a missile shield which would detect any hostile missiles coming our way and knock them out of the sky almost immediately. This is a difficult thing to do, basically the equivalent of trying to stop a bullet by firing another bullet at it. Not surprisingly, NMD has failed its preliminary tests, proving itself unable to differentiate between a mock warhead and a balloon - this despite the tests being performed in optimum controlled conditions which would never be recreated in the real world.

Opponents to NMD also point out that even if it worked, the system still should not be approved. The last land-based missile defense system the U.S. tried, the \$29 billion Safeguard, was declared obsolete 145 days after it had been put into operation. In addition, the NMD is a violation of existing and pending treaties, a fact which angers and concerns the international community and could result in the destabilization of important relationships. And finally, "advances" such as NMD inevitably lead to an expensive and dangerous arms race (which also hastens the system's obsolescence.)

Leading scientists and respected military veterans have criticized NMD, and some members of Congress, such as Dennis Kucinich and Barney Frank, have also expressed doubts about it. Yet the overriding question as far as Washington is concerned is not whether we should have an NMD, but how big it should be, with Clinton proposing a \$60 billion version and the Republican leadership countering that a \$240 billion version is necessary. And why? Because the generous folk at Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon have made clear how much an NMD would mean to them.

The fact that the U.S. spends too much on its military is alone sufficient justification for demanding that the budget be cut back. But there are other reasons as well. There is, for example, the moral argument that we as a civilized nation should be seeking pathways to peace rather than continuing on a road to war. There is also the belief that the U.S. should get out of the role of "Globo-Cop" and stop trying to be the police force to the world.

And there is the matter of "opportunity costs." Basically, this argument stresses that money which is spent on the military is money which is NOT being spent elsewhere (or, in some views, money which is being TAKEN from another program.) And these opportunity costs are substantial.

Suppose, for example, that we succeeded in cutting the military budget by \$40 billion. Figures compiled by BLSP show that money thereby saved could then be used for the following:

- providing health care for every uninsured child in America (\$6 billion)
- fully funding Head Start programs for all eligible children (\$8 billion)
- paying for two years of meals for hungry seniors (\$17 billion)
- providing housing for 500,000 homeless families (\$3 billion)
- building 1,000 new elementary schools (\$6 billion)

These are just samples, of course. You can plug in your own priorities. Child care for 1.1 million low income families (\$6 billion)? Juvenile crime prevention for 1.5 million youths (\$5 billion)? Middle class tax cut (\$10 billion)?

And spending money on programs like those listed above rather than on defense would have another benefit: job creation. Although the defense industry contractors like to point to the large number of employees they have, a study by the National Priorities Project (NPP) shows that they are not as good at generating jobs as they would have us believe. According to NPP, if we invest \$1 billion in military procurement, approximately 25,000 jobs are created. But that same \$1 billion invested in mass transit yields 36,000 jobs. Put it into education or healthcare and you create 41,000 and 47,000 jobs, respectively.

The point is this: America has fallen into a trap of pouring money into a military budget in such a way that our realistic defense needs are not met and resulting in a scandalous waste of money and resources. Rather than continuing on this path, we must cut the unhealthy fat out of the military and redirect our priorities to domestic programs that need the money and actually benefit the public.

Our elected leaders and the Pentagon, happy with the status quo and supported by the deep pockets of the defense industry, are not going to take action themselves. The only way we can bring this about is through building a critical mass - through letters, town hall meetings, phone calls, demonstrations, etc. - that demands change. ❖

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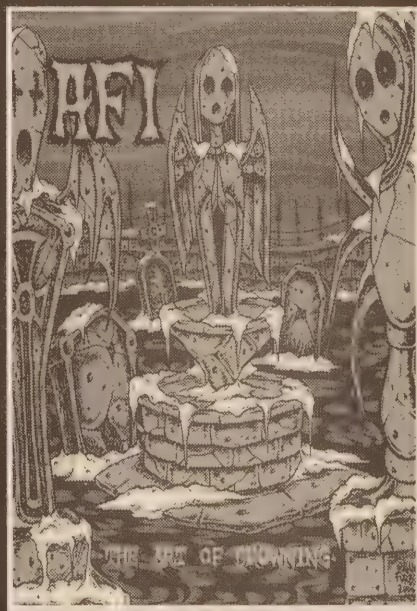
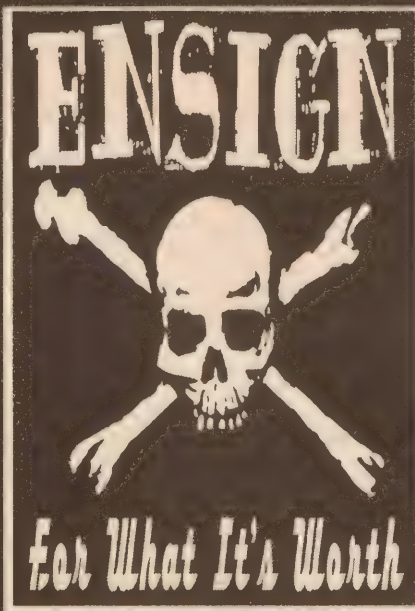
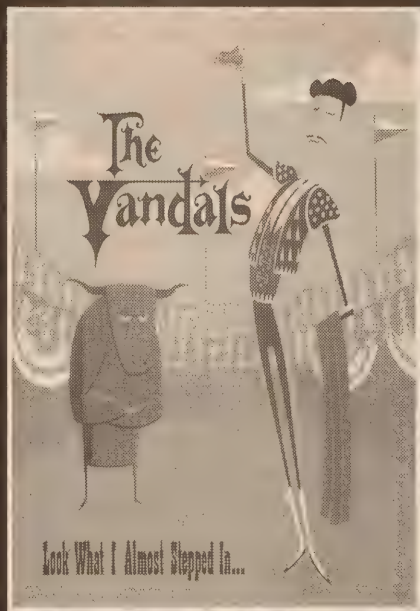
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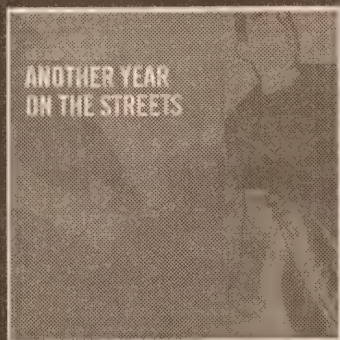
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T.O.P. picks



Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.

A Planet For Texas • *You Can Still Rock In America* • Diaphragm Records • They call this "agro-rock." I don't really care what the hell they call it; I call it kick-ass rock. It's borderline hardcore with a hillbilly twang (hence the agro-rock thing?). This is the band you would actually stay around for after the nationally-known band has left the stage at the club downtown. I'm sure A Planet would kick most bands' asses. They seem like a bunch of foul-mouthed, drinking a-holes who want to rock out and party like there's no tomorrow.

Dashboard Confessional • *The Swiss Army Romance* • Fiddler Records • Acoustic guitars have long been associated with folk music and protests in the '40s-'60s, and metal ballads in the '80s. This explains an aversion to the instrument. Yet, if you are able to erase the clichés, a lone acoustic guitar offers a wonderful means of expressing one's emotions and poetry. This is the success of *The Swiss Army Romance*. The acoustic sound is taken back and accompanied with a remarkable voice in an "emo" context. The heart on-the-sleeve lyrics capture plenty of fleeting emotions and doubts, all celebrated through a truly-promising voice. This is a rare find where the artistry overcomes material and scene boundaries.

DJ Assault • *Off the Chain, for the Y2K* • Intuit-Solar Records • If you are not familiar with the term "Ghetto Tech," you are in for a surprise. This emerging style features Techno beats with raunchy phrases and a Booty Bass feeling. The first words uttered are "Fuck you hoe," the title of the first track, and they made me laugh out loud. This song, along with track two, have a certain Rappin' 4-Tay - Playa'z Club bounce to them. After that, the tempo picks up, and the remaining 81 (yes 81) tracks are mixed together in a misogynistic flurry of beats and curses. Witness "Ass-N-Titties," "Asses Jigglin'," and, for some reason, two different tracks named "Big Booty Bitch" (probably was too large a booty for just one song).

Ice-T • *Greatest Hits: The Evidence* • Atomic Pop • This is all *The Evidence* you need to understand Ice-T was a rap pioneer, one of the first true pimps who challenged authority directly. Ice-T started his verbal assault in the mid-late 80's with such classic LPs as *Rhyme Pays* and *Power*. He offered listeners rugged, uncensored, rebellious lyrics that spoke out against drugs (in favor of "dope" music in the amazing "I'm Your Pusher"), against street players (in the funky "High Rollers"), about gangs (in the dark song "Colors" - title track from the movie), and about street life (in the remixed, uptempo and hook-filled "The Lane"). While free speech opponents ripped Ice-T for his anti-cop, profane lyrics, many failed to see, not only that he wrote great lyrics, but that they were, for the most part, very positive. This is a superb collection of tracks spanning 1987-2000, documenting Ice-T's versatile hip-hop style.

Koufax • *It Had To Do With Love* • Vagrant Records • I have to say that *It Had To Do With Love* is a refreshing change from the stagnant state that music is currently in. Playing pop music with a piano and keys backbone, Koufax gives a nod to the '70s musical tradition while keeping at least one foot firmly planted in the present. The piano provides the base on top of which beautiful pop songs come to life, freeing us from our misery-filled lives.

Ratos De Porao • *Sistemados Pelo Crucifixo* • Alternative Tentacles • Back in '83, Ratos De Porao released, what at the time was, the only hardcore album in South America. They recorded it in one day with no knowledge about recording. After 17 years, the songs have evolved a bit (as well as the lineup), and RDP thought it was time to re-release these songs using better recording techniques. They also added two re-recordings from their second album and a cover from Portugal's Aquidelo. Plus they included the original version of the album in its entirety as a bonus track. This way you can compare both recordings and judge for yourself which is better. (I prefer the original version. Call me sentimental.)

Red Radio Flyer • *Gettin' Somewhere* • Mother West • This New York band has real heart and substance to their music, and a very professional, polished style. There's a near-country sound to this album, but it isn't country - in much the same way the music of Counting Crows is not. Look for this band to go far - they have the makings and the ability to perform eloquently.

Screeching Weasel • *Teen Punks In Heat* • Panic Button • I mean, what can you say? It's Screeching Weasel. They are the Grand High Poobahs of that sweet, sweet pop-punk style that sounds like the bastard child of The Beach Boys and AC/DC. There are 20 songs on this disc and they run the whole spectrum of emotions from the touching "I Love You" to the even more touching and sentimental "I Wanna Fuck". SW has brought in new guitarist Phillip Aaron Presley, of Teen Idols fame. This is beautiful.

The Jealous Sound • *self-titled EP* • Better Looking Records • Blair Shehan, the genius behind the now-defunct band Knapsack, is in fantastic form with his new outfit - The Jealous Sound. Using powerful crescendos and tempo changes, Shehan's new band delivers a sound that is similar to Knapsack. However, gone are the screamed vocals. Instead, Shehan delivers breathier, equally heartfelt vocals. The intensity of the songs is immense - not with the same hardcore style of Knapsack, but just as powerful. Whether you want to look at this as a renamed version of Knapsack or not is up to you. The fact is, this six-song release is a welcomed and remarkable debut from one of the best front-men in music today.

CD releases

200 North/Esteem • *Split CD* • Eulogy Records • Holy Hardcore Hammer of the Gods! This is the best hardcore release this year, if not in years. 200 North is a young straight-edge band that shows promise. Esteem, Florida's best-kept hardcore secret, deliver. They power through seven amazing songs. Emotional and positive, and extremely well produced, Esteem has put out a watershed release that sets a new direction for hardcore. It's nice to put the '90s behind us and see that there is a future to hardcore, all the more amazing that it's coming from Naples, Florida.

7Seconds • *Scream Real Loud... Live!* • Side One Dummy • This is surprisingly clear for a live recording and a solid document of all your favorite 7Seconds songs. You even get covers of "If the Kids Are United," and "99 Red Balloons," and 24 more songs. If you've always wanted to know what 7Seconds were about, get this CD, particularly if your first and last experience with them was the *Soul Force Revolution* album. If you're a long time fan, well, these 26 songs are well worth having.

90 Day Men • *(It Is) It* • Critical Band • Southern Records • Have you ever played that game where someone asks you what the perfect line-up for a three band concert would be? Mine would have to be Blonde Redhead, Don Caballero and 90 Day Men. The three bands compliment each other musically, with 90 Day Men bridging the gap between the other two. They play with the same experimental attitude that Blonde Redhead has, yet they also play chunkier guitar riffs, a la Don Caballero.

AFI • *The Art Of Drowning* • Nitro • I'm not quite sure what happened, but I just did not care for this disc too much. It doesn't seem hard enough to be hardcore, but it's not punk enough to be punk. It really doesn't even seem like a delicate blend of the two. There are 14 tracks here and some of them are really good, but not good enough to support the rest of it.

Agent Orange • *Greatest and Latest...* • Cleopatra Records • Agent Orange is an '80s Orange County skaterock/punk band that wrote the songs that formed the soundtrack to my early teens. Flashforward to present day and they've released a recording of some new material and some older material. My favorites are all here: "Breakdown," "Everything Turns Grey," "Cry for help...", "Bloodstains." I'm not a big fan of the re-recordings, as the energy captured on the originals isn't, and can't be, recaptured. Punk isn't just about the songs. It's in the emotion of the delivery. Ideally you'd have new emotions to share 16 years later, lest you inadvertently parody your earlier works by emoting, rather than sharing genuine emotion. There are no liner notes explaining why they felt the need to re-record these songs, or why they got back together. I'm probably harder on this because I really hold these guys in high esteem.

Automator • *A Much Better Tomorrow* • 75 Ark Entertainment • Back in 1996, Dan the Automator released the *A Better Tomorrow* EP. Recently, he decided to add a few vintage tracks to that record and turn it into an LP. His raw Hip-Hop beats are good either on their own, or accompanied by rapping by Sinister 6000 (Kool Keith), Neph the Madman, and Poet. Also lending his scratching skills is DJ QBert on the track "I Want Da Mic." The result is a more complete taste of the Automator's musical style around 1996.

Beth Hirsch • *Life Is Mine* • Studio K7 • You've probably heard Beth Hirsch sing before, performing on Air's *Moon Safari* album. Her sensual, soft

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

voice has a certain beauty and emotion that is not lost in this remix EP. Four versions of the title track appear here, including the album version and three remixes by Red Snapper, Tommy Hools and Borngräber & Strüver. All three tracks differ in musical styles. The Red Snapper mix is moody and almost Trip-Hop. Tommy Hools adds a house/Disco beat to his rendition, while Borngräber & Strüver give it a nice piano melody and a combo of Breakbeat & Drum 'N Bass.

Big L • R.I.P. • Rawkus • If you haven't yet heard, Big L is dead. If you're like me, you probably never even knew he was alive. And for good reason, the music on this disc is entirely forgettable and dated. Is it merely coincidence that all these dead gangster rappers sound the same or is there some conspiracy that continues to rid the world of mediocre and cliché hip hop?

Billy Bacon & the Forbidden Pigs • Pig Latin • Triple X Records • The press kit describes Billy Bacon & the Forbidden Pigs as the "kings of TexMex Blues-abilly." That's the perfect way to describe their sound. Songs combine the Mexican sounds of the Norteña and the Cumbia styles, with a little of Blues and Country, with a touch of Jimmy Buffet. Some of them reminded me of the Monkees for some reason. (Imagine Davie Jones drunk of his ass in Tijuana.) It might sound like a gimmick, but Mr. Bacon has been doing this for over a decade.

Blonde Redhead • Mélodie Citronique • Touch and Go Records • As you may know, the members of Blonde Redhead are multi-national, their members hailing from Japan, Italy, as well as the U.S. This EP features 3 tracks from their last album, *Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons*, re-recorded in different languages. There's "In Particular" in French, "Hated Because of Great Qualities" in Italian, and a remixed version of "For the Damaged" in English. Also included are two unreleased tracks, one new track and a cover of Serge Gainsbourg's "Slogan."

Bob City • self-titled • Deraillleur Records • I had a hard time understanding the lead singer, but I'm surprised I didn't hear him say "pedal to the metal" on this album. Bob City's music is blues and country influenced garage rock, with above normal production values. There's a certain Mad Trucker Gone Mad thing going on at times. This 25-minute CD starts out with the punchy "Boystown" setting the mood, letting you know they are here to kick some rock and roll ass. After that you'll be hooked in, unable to press the stop button (not that you'll want to)

Books on Tape • Take a Read on the Riding • Mad Mad Records • Books on Tape plays "abstract beat compositions for a sophisticated audience," according to the literature that came with the album. Their music is not as abstract as perhaps Autechre or Squarepusher, but it is cool. This music is appropriate, mostly for chillin' out after a long night of raving, or for getting your groove on with your honey. Apparently their music has been heard on MTV's teen-romp drama "Undressed," so you know it's got to be sexy.

Brandtson • Trying to Figure Each Other Out EP • Deep Elm • Brandtson gives us a new 6-song EP full of songs inspired by heartbreak and hope. Their style of chiming guitars and dual vocals is a perfect compliment to their hook-laden pop tracks. The press release said "signature aggression," but I'd have to disagree... not that there's anything wrong with that. This is passionate, melodic, and real.

Burning Heads • Escape • Victory Records •

Though this starts off in a hardcore vein, Burning Heads play pop punk and reggae as well. This is a really catchy and likable album, so give it a listen. The CD also includes two very cool animations in QuickTime you can play on your computer.

Carl Verheyen • Atlas Overload • Provoque • Now here's a guy with a resume. Besides fronting Supertramp post-1985, Verheyen has contributed music to over 100 major movies, and has played alongside greats such as Dave Grusin, Stanley Clark, and Little Richard. His fantastic guitar prowess creates an atmosphere sometimes as powerful and rockin' as George Thoroughgood, and at other times gentle as Joni Mitchell with a skinned knee. This album is full of good things.

Cave In • Jupiter • Hydra Head Records • All expectations should be left behind before you play this CD. Cave In have morphed to become a progressive pop band, similar to Our Lady Peace. You must commend their bravery in searching out their bliss in Middle Eastern tones and higher octave singing. The instrumentation is lush and beautifully arranged and, ideally, fans of Radiohead and other bands pushing their envelopes will get hold of this release and appreciate its artistic merits as a concept album.

Chainsaw Kittens • The All American • 4 Alarm Records • You know the name, you know the sound, you know this band, right? Wrong! This is a bit of a different Kittens disc. There is some piano here and at times they sound more like Ben Folds Five than their usual noisy selves. Still, there is plenty of noise, like on "Gleaming Soft White Teens" and "The Treasure Is Love." However, their best song on this disc is, of course, the genius cover of "We Got The Beat."

Chixdiggitt • From Scene to Shining Scene • Honest Don's • These songs are going to get stuck in your head, bouncing around like moths on a light bulb. This is good, fun pop-punk in the Queers style. There are 11 songs on the disc and my only beef with the whole thing is that it seems kind of short. I guess that means that I will simply have to purchase their next disc.

Chubb • From Us to You • Pop Culture Records • High energy "new skool" punk, which translates to some good punk tunes like "Just Another Love Song", and others that don't show much range. When they change tempo and slow down they display some serious musical talent. Based out of Ottawa, these three guys have a strong following in their home country and are looking to pick up some fans here in the states. With the So-Cal punk sound and the Canadian musical heritage of such greats as Celine Dion, I'm sure this won't be a problem.

Close Call • Too Close EP • Espo Records • With nods to Burn, Judge and other old-school hardcore bands (plus newer bands like Hot Water Music and Avail), this four-piece from New England is ready to tear it up with *Too Close*, a six-song EP. What this CD offers is pounding rhythms, fast-paced music, vocals that are more spoken than sung, group chanting, and plenty of melody spread throughout. This is windmill inducing, stage-dive encouraging hardcore for those who prefer it with more punk than metal.

Coach • Package Deal • Doghouse Records • This trio from Germany sounds like a garage Jesus Jones. Their brand of pop isn't too bad but it's not astounding either. The singer's voice could use some work but, overall, they're pretty tight. Their live shows are said to be their strong point, so if they come to your town, drop by and have a peek.

Confrontation Camp • Objects In The Mirror Are

Closer Than They Appear • **Artemis Records** • This will have all those little "wiggers" blowing out the five-million mega-watt speakers in their tricked out hoopdees. Here are a few guys from Public Enemy (Chuck D and Prof. Griff) and a few ass-kicking rock stars together to make the rap-metal album of the month. This is good stuff, with that definite flavor from Public Enemy, but with enough rock, and soul, to make it a very cool hunk o' plastic.

[DARYL] • Communication:Duration • Urining Records • These guys proclaim to be the next wave of music and ask that we all remember they were first, before all the bandwagoners jump onboard. Normally, I'd pan a CD just because I hate egotism and view that as egotistical. However, this band backs it up and, though I don't know if this music will be the rage in a year or so, they're definitely a talented band. There are a lot of keyboards on here, like Flock of Seagulls keyboards, but this isn't retro. They're making a new brand of retro that isn't retro at all. It's like straight-ahead rock but with Moog-ish keys. If you're confused, give it a listen. I think you'll dig it.

Deltron 3030 • self-titled • 75 Ark • World War IV is over and half the world's a desert — at least that's the story behind this hip-hop epic. Combining the vocal skills of Del tha Funkee Homosapien, producer Dan the Automator and DJ Kid Koala, they team up to travel through the galaxy and "experience life as a crew." This album is their story, told through spaced-out samples, smooth beats, constant changes in sounds, and Del's unmistakable flow (delivering futuristic lyrics). They meet many along the way including Billy Ray Valitfine (Mr. Lif), Wimpy (Peanut Butter Wolf), Vince Paul McMahon (Prince Paul) and many others. The result is an out-of-this-world experience, sci-fi hip-hop of the dopest design. This, literally, takes hip-hop to the next level.

dewey defeats truman • B-Sides, Rarities and Out-Takes • Silver Girl Records • Featuring ex-members of Red Dye No. 5 and Luper, dewey defeats truman (yes, all lowercase) offers eight tracks of creative guitar pop-rock. The vocals are superb while the song structure is original, captivating and very melodic (even Sebadoh took note, covering dewey defeats truman's "Magnet's Coil" — the hidden song after track eight). *B-Sides* is only a teaser for what we can expect in the future from this San Diego three-piece — expect a debut album shortly.

Dirty Barby • Sleep When I'm Dead • self-released • Dirty Barby takes a lot of ideas that have existed in punk for decades and, miracles of miracles, actually make them work. The sing-screamy vocals remind me of all-female punk rock from the early '90s. You could say Dirty Barby is an evolution of the bands The Third Sex and Raoul, if those bands had learned to play their instruments. It's not to say this is a female-fronted group — with their horror-drag, who knows? Nevertheless, I'm a big fan of this CD because the vocals are their own instrument and the music is fast driving punk rock mixed in a way making it easy for repeat listening.

DJ Rap + Kenny Ken • Brave New World • Intuit-Solar • After the much-hyped release of the sexy DJ Rap's *Learning Curve*, she teamed up with the well-respected Kenny Ken to release this 13-track, continuous mix of some of their favorite Drum 'n' Bass tunes. Featured are G Squad, Hybridz, A-Sides, Ray Keith, DJ SS, DJ Hype, Randall/Flexx, Mickey Finn/Special K, as well as Rap and Ken themselves. If you like Drum 'n' Bass, you owe it to yourself to get this album.

DMT • Terminal Illness and little dog music por la chupacabra • Stray Records • Drum Machine Technicians (DMT) was conceived by DJ Cue and Eddie

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Def, as a series of 5 discs to be released, featuring Eddie Def in the first and third, DJ Cue in the second and fourth, and both in the final disc. *Terminal Illness and little dog music por la chupacabra* is the first installment, featuring Eddie Def manning the turntables. Unfortunately, this is not what you would call "Skatch" music. Instead the repetitive beats that seem to go nowhere make this more of a Muzak record. The beats are cool, but this seems to be more of a collection of samples, rather than songs.

Drowningman • Rock And Roll Killing Machine • Revelation Records • Holy shit! If music could kill you, I'd be dead! This is brutal, shit-kicking, eye-gouging, monster walls-of-noise that will blow you away. Check out tunes like "If God Loves A Winner, He's Going To Want To Fuck Me In A Minute" and "Last Week's Minutes From The Meeting Of The Secret Society Of Your Friends Who Actually Hate You". This is like very few things on Earth and it will be to your detriment not to experience Drowningman.

EC8OR • The One and Only High and Low • Digital Hardcore Recordings • There are really two types of recording artists in this world. There are those that, when recording, monitor audio levels so as to not get any distortion from overmodulation, and then there's the Digital Hardcore roster. Not one sound on EC8OR's CD is spared from this sonic anomaly, but of course this is exactly the point. After all, how else would you rebel against the over-produced syrup crap that is on the radio these days? Influenced by both punk and techno, EC8OR is political and beat-heavy. Gina D'Orio's high pitched shrill vocals threaten to pierce your eardrums, while the distorted drumbeats laid down by Patric C threaten to pierce your speakers. This is not for the faint of heart.

Eulcid • The Wind Blew All The Fires Out • Second Nature • The liner notes state that this album is for use with headphones. I'm greatly inclined to agree with them. There's a lot of studio trickery and progressive experimentation here, such that you can't put it in the context of songs but rather as a whole, a complete musical composition. Eulcid is a band that aspires to artistry, so definitely give this a listen with headphones on. This is your indie-punk rock Pink Floyd.

Favez • Gentlemen Start Your Engines • Doghouse Records • Favez is a five-piece rock outfit hailing from Switzerland. Their vocalist, while not American, spent a lot of time in the U.S. and his Swiss accent is nearly impossible to detect. The music is energized rock with keen melodies and a pop sense — a la Errortype 11, Tugboat Annie or Jimmy Eat World. Moving forward from their debut album, this second release is far more intense and powerful.

Fear • American Beer • Hall of Records • Remember Fear? Of course you do. You love them, too. Lee Ving is at the reins with a new back-up band, though the sound is, joyously, still the same as it ever was. This is fast, ferocious, old-school, beer-fueled, punk rock and roll. The music is fast, funny, and very easy to listen to.

Fifteen • Hush EP • Sub City • Jeff Ott and company are back with three tracks of socio-politically aware, catchy, punk tunes. "Hush" is a song that criticizes a society that fails to truly help child abuse victims speak out ("And the adults say 'hush, hush, keep it down now, voices carry.'"). "Every year at this time" is a look at the sadness that surrounds each passing year, but tries to have an optimistic outlook. The last track, "MRR", is a very pointed, and accurate, attack on Maximum Rock N' Roll magazine, the bible of punk rock. This is a solid,

three-track release from a band with a mission. Also, proceeds from this release benefit The Purple Beret's, a women's rights group.

Fly Pan Am • Sedatif en Fréquences et Sillons • Constellation Records • The title of this CD translates loosely into "grooved frequency sedative." It's an appropriate title, since you may very well end up feeling sedated by the time it is over. There are three tracks divided into two sides. Side A has parts and pieces from their debut LP looped together to form a kind of Cliff Notes version for those that can't get through the whole album. Side B features a repetitive groove, while tape manipulations add a different dimension to the track. You may find yourself fast forwarding through the non-musical parts, but when they actually play music, it is beautifully drone.

Gameface • Always On • Revelation Records • For 10 years, Gameface has been rocking out emotional punk tunes infused with loads of melody. I first heard Gameface in 1991 and have been a loyal fan ever since. *Always On* is a 10-track album displaying the quartet's ability to script sentimental songs that have a pop-sense but pack a powerful punch. Jeff's sincere vocals and lyrics meld perfectly with the blend of melodic punk rock and the subtle country twang. Gameface has set the standard for many of today's punk bands and they continue to set a superior example with each new release.

Glasseater • 7 Years Bad Luck • Eulogy Recordings • Hailing from Miami, Glasseater is a five-piece that has mastered how to effectively combine sung and screamed vocals. Capitalizing on Jason's fantastic singing ability, the intensely screamed parts, while used sparingly, do a great job of adding aggression to each track. With *7 Years Bad Luck*, Glasseater has fused the finer aspects of melodic punk rock with hardcore power. This album features nine tracks that will get your toes tappin' and your heart pumpin'.

Hey Mercedes • self-titled EP • Polyvinyl Record Co. • "Long live Braid!" I scream as I listen to this debut release from Bob Nanna and two other members (Damon and Todd) of the great and deceased Midwest band Braid. The fourth and final spot in Hey Mercedes is taken by non-Braid member Mark Dawursk (ex-Alligator Gun member). The four-song EP clearly shows Braid broke up before they were really done. The vocals are the distinct and sincere vocals that are undeniably Braid, I mean Bob. The music, while still having many of the great aspects of Braid, is more straight-forward and rock-oriented — this new band is less quirky. Hey Mercedes delivers creative, honest rock tunes that feature diverse guitar parts and driving rhythms. I anxiously await their full-length release.

Homeless Wonders • self-titled • Suburban Home Records • I heard these guys on a compilation disc a long time ago and I remember not being impressed and now I can't remember why. This is a pretty good disc. It's fast and melodic with just a hint of anger thrown in to keep you from going into a diabetic coma. If you thought that the Dead Kennedys had the market on short songs, check out "School Sucks" on this disc, clocking in at an amazing 7.5 seconds. Don't blink or you'll miss it; and you don't want to miss it.

Hush • self-titled • DTW • Detroit is getting much respect from the hip-hop world since Eminem broke. Well, there's more to Detroit's hip-hop scene than just Eminem and Hush is here to show you why. Hush spits his rhymes skillfully, with great delivery using beats and samples that are perfectly crafted. Blasted by sounds, Hush pounds out varying styles, mixing in opera loops and strings, orchestration

and multi-track vocals. While the music is a serious display of skills, Hush says, "Most of [the album] is funny. One day I'll be in a hardcore mood." I'm fine just having fun with this album.

Imbroco • Are You My Lionkiller? • Deep Elm • Imbroco has a fascinating style, sometimes sounding discordant. But then it's made clear a couple seconds later that the apparent discordance was all part of their subtle plan. There's obviously a lot of work put into this great layering of instrumentation and varied tempo and dynamics, yet it has a sound that is innocent and unpretentious. Excellent work with distortion.

IQU & Friends • Teenage Dream • K Records • This latest release by IQU is supposed to be an EP, but it's over fifty minutes in length. Their style is electronic, with electric guitars and standup bass thrown in for fun. For this album, IQU enlisted the help of some of their friends to remix the title track, each incorporating his own interpretation of the track. Styles range from acid jazz to drum and bass, with many variations in between. Somehow, each remix sounds very different from the others, so you won't be bored senseless by listening to the same track seven times.

Jebediah • Of Someday Shambles • Big Wheel Recreation • G'Day! We have some Aussie popsters here, mates. They are apparently all the rage in their homeland and are now testing the waters with us Americans. They've got a big sound, that's for sure. They're part indie-pop and Brit pop and name the Pixies and Blur among bands they sound like. Check out "Trapdoor" right away and then go back to the beginning. Cool stuff.

Jejune • R.I.P. • Big Wheel Recreation • Being a huge fan of Jejune I was equally happy and sad to see this CD, as this is their latest and last recording. They seemed on such an upswing with *This Afternoon's Malady*. The soaring vocals float up in the new material, though Araby sings only two songs. The tunes are extremely eclectic in style, to the extent you wouldn't think it was Jejune. This is a reason they broke up. Nevertheless, this CD is a must for fans of Jejune, if only to have the songs from their split 7" with Jimmy Eat World on CD format (even though the vocals are muffled by the mix.)

Jets to Brazil • Four Corned Night • Jade Tree Records • Throw out your expectations of this album. It's not like their first album, *Orange Rhyming Dictionary*, nor is it like the members' previous bands, Jawbreaker, Handsome, Van Pelt or Texas is the Reason. This is a 13-track album that is "exactly what we wanted it to be," according to lead singer, guitarist Blake. He croons bluesy, folksy pop-rock tunes with his trademark vocals backed by the band's creative orchestration. While some of the tracks on here capture the intensity that made Jets so great, quite a few tracks lack that energy, ending up somewhat unremarkable. I guess I had too many expectations, because this is a good record — it's just not what I hoped to hear from Jets. Maybe it will grow on me.

Jimmy Eat World/Jebediah • Split CD EP • Big Wheel Recreation • Some things I simply don't understand. Like quantum physics, calculus or how Jimmy Eat World ever got any indie cred. These guys are nothing more than spoiled rotten mama boys churning out watered down pop rock. These are love songs for little girls to drool over, a mere genre and haircut away from N'Sync — far from their best material. Jebediah isn't any better. With any luck, they too will have a lame theme song on some teeny bopper melodrama.

King Apparatus • self-titled • Asian Man Records •

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

I can just imagine King Apparatus playing at a local bar, entertaining the late '20s, early '30s crowd. They play poppy-ska, but the singer's style is very reminiscent of Jimmy Buffet. I don't mean they sound alike, just that they have a similar laid back attitude. This CD would be great to listen to while driving on your way to the beach.

Landos 45 • The End • Harmless Records • This is a five-song EP and I guess that is enough for me. I listened to this disc a few times and it just didn't do a thing for me. There are some big guns in this band (ex-Bolweevils lead singer), but it seems that they just can't get it together enough to come up with any really great music.

Link 80 • The Struggle Continues • Asian Man Records • It took me a couple of times through to decide that I liked this disc, but I really don't know why. At first it seemed that they couldn't decide whether they are a punk, metal or SKA band. It all came out well in the end. This is a pretty decent SKA-core disc in the old Voodoo Glow Skulls idiom. There are a lot of good tunes on the CD and I think that if you are a good and pure person, you will like this album a lot. Maybe even if you are not.

Lucid Nation • DNA • Brain Floss Records • These are five chicks who rock. There is an AC/DC cover on here (the growling "Night Prowler" from *Highway to Hell*) so you know immediately that these ladies are goddesses of rock. I really like this album because it is so hard to describe. It does not compare to much else. It's kind of hard, but kind of mellow, kind of different but not inaccessible. It is really good. I hope that if these gals make it big (and they should) that they will not turn into a bunch of radio-rock pussies.

Luckie Strike • Future is Turning • Tomato Head • I'm going to start off with a complaint: This is only a six track EP. If you buy it and listen to it, you will wish that it was a full-length because it will make you a happy, better person by listening. They have a great female singer who does justice to this fun pop-punk. They also cover an Elvis Costello tune on here, but we should try not to hold it against them.

Midget Handjob • Midnight Snack Break at the Poodle Factory • Epitaph Records • This was a surprising CD for Epitaph to release. It is nowhere near punk. However, frontman Keith Morris used to front Black Flag and the Circle Jerks, so perhaps my initial reaction was premature. Anyway, Midget Handjob's music serves as a backdrop for the spoken word narratives Morris serves up, reminiscent of MC 900 Foot Jesus. You might be turned off initially by the spoken word (as I was), but just listen – you'll soon be entranced by the stories that Mr. Morris weaves. Particularly entertaining was "Hurricane Morris", a 14+ minute track in which he relives his experience during a night in New Orleans while enjoying some Hurricanes.

Midiron Blast Shaft • Starts Fires in Your Pants • Reptilian Records • Here is a real cool disc from a band I've never heard of. I love the name, don't you? This is an energy packed album that you can listen to over and over. When you listen to it, you can hear all the influences that have combined to make this band what they are. The sound is heavy and fast, but they are tight and well-produced. This is a band I would love to see live.

Minor Disturbance • Bullet For You • Run & Hide Records • Their CD says "Punk for life" on the back. That's as good an explanation as I can give for this band. The production isn't too tight or clean on here, but it's their first go round. Throw 'em a bone.

Murphy's Law • The Best of Times • Artemis

Records • Since the 1980's, Murphy's Law has been churning out some of the most rockin' punk, hard-core, funky music that your lame ass has ever heard. This new 19-track offering has lots of fun tunes and fast, funky beats to keep you skanking, thrashing and pooking all night long.

Mushmouth • Lift The Curse • Triple Crown Records • Wow! And, in fact, holy shit. These guys come out of the corner swinging and don't stop until they wrench the last screaming chord out of their fatigued guitars. This is hardcore the way it was meant to be: raw, angry, and fast. This nine-song CD has my vote for the best new hardcore that I've heard this year. There is a metal edge to the disc that blends in perfectly without overwhelming the HC feel.

Old School 101 • Pura Vida • Victory • Not being a fan of their first record, I am really surprised at how good this new release is! You get a lot of fun, positive hardcore here, and some horns for good measure. Skip Skool's voice really carries throughout this record, as he is a singer, not a growler or screamer. If you like fun and fast hardcore that doesn't dwell on problems or pointing fingers, Old School 101 is here for you.

oRSO • Long Time By • Perishable Records • Some refer to oRSO's music as circus music, some form of weird musical sideshow. There are certainly lots of instruments, some of which you may not encounter on a regular basis: banjo, melodica, organs, typewriter, office chair, tuning pegs, 55 gallon drum, even a glockenspiel! The music is slow in tempo, arranging all these instruments (among others) and vocals into a listenable concoction you're sure to enjoy. Step right up, Folks!

Paris Texas • Brazilliant! • Polyvinyl Records • Fast, hard-driving pop is the way to describe this Wisconsin-based (huh? I thought they were from Texas?!) band. It's been a long time since I've listened to a CD that has started off kicking ass on the first cut and kept right on through, but this one does just fine. OK, it's only a five-song EP and track five is a BIT down tempo, but it doesn't completely wuss out. This is the best power pop I've heard in a long time.

Pele • The Nudes • Polyvinyl Records • Somehow, most instrumental bands tend to lean to moody, sad songwriting. Not Pele. Their music has an uplifting quality, even though no words are ever uttered. They also have no fear of mixing genres, by blending jazz, country, and pop. They even have some acoustic guitars at

times. Think of a less schizophrenic Don Caballero.

Peterbuilt • Rumormill EP • Amateur Records • Peterbuilt is a four-piece emo rock outfit from Orlando, Florida. This seven-song release displays the band's ability to deliver heartfelt tunes with a blast of energy. The vocals are well-sung and very emotional (sometimes too dramatic sounding, though). While these songs have an intensity to them, their live show is far more powerful. I think this CD is a good representation of the solid songwriting, strong melodies, and creative guitar parts that make up Peterbuilt – just don't miss seeing them live.

Pg. 99 • Document #5 • Reptilian Records • This CD is the soundtrack to a twisted, frightening, violent, yet sometimes beautiful, movie. While this isn't really a movie soundtrack, it does move through tracks like it was telling a story. The music is intense, chaotic, scary, and hard as hell – with brief interludes of melody. The vocals are spastically screamed over three guitars blaring feedback and searing sounds, a dark and powerful bassline and schizophrenic drumming. It comes together as a brutal 10-track assault on your ears.

Premium • Lucky • self-released • I was very impressed when I popped this CD in my stereo. What I heard was a very well produced, independent release of hard music. This band would do very well on the Ozfest stage, sounding a bit like Korn and Papa Roach. The guitars are churning, the vocals angry. Premium packs a punch, but is not too aggressive for radio play.



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Proudentall • What's Happening Here • SunSeaSky Productions • Proudentall is a three piece pop-rock combo out of Kansas City. Formed in '96 and, to the best I can gather, they are now putting out their first album, *What's Happening Here*. It features an early Police pop-punk sound on tracks like "The Blood Race" and Track 4 (the damn typeface on the album is unreadable). They claim it's all about making good music that's emotional. If so, the predominant emotion would have to be melancholy.

Refused • The New Noise Theology EP • Burning Heart • This is an amazing record! "New Noise" starts this off, You'll "wool" along in short order. If you have their final full-length, *The Shape of Punk To Come*, you're familiar with "New Noise" and "Refused are Fucking Dead." However, this EP has two new songs and a very cool remix of "Refused are..." I really recommend getting this, as "New Noise" is an amazing song, and the CD has the QuickTime video you can play on your computer.

Sayhitolisa • Living Better Through Electricity • Intelligent Records • Hey! This is pretty fucking good! It's power pop, but it rocks a little more than that happy power pop that the kids are listening to these days. "Paper Plane" and "Washed Up" exhibit that rockin' sound. However, on some songs, like "Pimpin'" the dude just flat-out screams. I'll be digging this for a while.

Shutdown • Far and Few Between • Victory Records • In short time, Shutdown is coming back to hardcore swinging with a new full-length. The music is extremely tight and explosive, yet they are essentially singing the same damn hardcore themes of staying true and holding strong and never changing and watching you fall down. In their attempts to be true to hardcore roots of singing what's in their hearts, well, it's the same song from the '80s. Though they haven't developed in the lyrics department, sonically this is amazing hardcore, making me want to sing along despite the tired words. You'd be a fool to miss out on this record, so pick it up, sing a long, and hope they tackle less introspective material in the future.

Sig Transit Gloria • 2 8 2000 EP • Johans Face Records • This is a poppy record with great use of keyboards to further their music. Whereas emo focuses on what never was nor will be, Sig Transit Gloria sing of wishing to spend nights together, first kisses, spending more time together, parents coming home, sneaking off together, and all the youthful glories of racing hearts and hormones. Get this EP now! I've been listening to this constantly.

Slow Jets • Worm into Phoenix • Morphiux Records • Featuring ex-members of Roads to Space Travel and Land Speed Record (particularly Marc Berrong, whose credit is "magician"), the Slow Jets construct pop songs with a bit of an edge, thanks to Greg Prestons strained, and sometimes out of tune, vocal style, reminiscent of the Lynnfield Pioneers' Dan Cook. I must admit, it took me a couple of listens to warm up to this CD, but after the fourth or fifth time, I began to really dig the jangly guitars and catchy hooks.

Slowcoach • New Strategies are Necessary, This is not Solid Ground • Silvergirl Records • The debut album from Slowcoach, out of central California, puts together rock and some very trippy mood tracks for a strong first showing. They get a little left of center on "Black Tar" which is reminiscent of Phillip Glass on quaaludes. When they stick to the rock they're good, just wander off to get a snack during the intermission tunes.

Sonic Joyride • Behemoth • Anomaly Records •

Sonic Joyride is anything but. Instead of wasting anymore of my limited brainpower on this crap, I'll let the lyrics speak for themselves. From the chorus to Modern Day Galahad: "I want to sing, I want to dance, I want to live out loud / I want to cry, I want to feel, I want to live somehow / Fly me to the moon." Nuff said.

State of Bengal • Visual Audio • Six Degrees Records • There has been a rising interest in Asian influenced electronica recently, and State of Bengal (AKA Sam Zaman) is partly responsible, as co-conspirator with Talvin Singh and the Anokha collaboration. *Visual Audio* is his debut record, and it combines Drum 'N' Bass, Breakbeat, and Hip-Hop with Indian musical elements such as tablas and unique vocal arrangements. If you are at all interested in the up-and-coming Asian Underground movement, I suggest you give State of Bengal a listen.

Statiks • Dead Ends And Decadence • Unity Squad Records • Okay, it seems that there is a chick playing bass in this band. I am usually more apt to fall in love with a band if there is a girl involved in some capacity, but this was not enough to make me wet myself. This is driving, rock-oriented punk that almost has an old-school feel. The actual recording seems pretty poor - it almost sounds like a demo tape, not the final produced piece. It wasn't bad, but it wasn't great either.

Stephen Percy • Before And Laughter • Triple X Records • Recognize that name but can't quite place it? Let me give you a hint: "What comes around goes around, I'll tell you why..." Got it now? That's right, this is THE Stephen Percy, of Ratt fame. I was going to say "formerly of Ratt," but Ratt is still out there playing (state fairs mostly, I think). There are tunes on here from his Ratt days, his days with his old band Arcade ("Cry No More" is a great track) and his current "other" band, Vicious Delite. There aren't any surprises on here; Stephen doesn't try to be Pearl Jam or anything like that. It's all 80's metal, all the time. There are 19 songs on here, some you've heard, some you haven't. I'm a metal head from way back so you know I'm giving this the two-fisted pump all the way.

Sunday's Best • Poised to Break • Polyvinyl Record Co. • There's a definite difference between pop and candy-coated pop. With *Poised to Break*, Sunday's Best delivers a mature, energized pop record, free of the forced and sugar-sweet pop attitude that takes away from true quality. Instead, this 10-track album puts forth hook-filled rock tunes loaded with infectious melodies and supported with heartfelt vocals. Blair (The Jealous Sound, ex-Knapsack) guests and co-wrote one track. This is an honest album of massively addictive proportions.

Talib Kweli & Hi Tek • Reflection Eternal • Rawkus • Kweli (who teamed with Mos Def in *Black Star*) is ready to wake people up, teamed with his DJ, Hi Tek, creating the musical force known as Reflection Eternal. This album is a lyrical journey featuring smooth flows and creative styles (including such guests as Xzibit, Mos Def, De La Soul and Kool G Rap). Hi Tek is one of the best, dropping original beats, skillful scratches, a scattering of samples and some of the coolest hooks you've ever heard. Kweli's flow is unstoppable, spitting out rhymes that leave any normal person tongue-tied - riding anything Hi Tek throws out for him. Reflection Eternal is a soulful blend of urban rhythms, jazzy interludes, funky flows and ghetto attitude.

The Blood Brothers • This Adultery is Ripe • Sec-ond Nature • Led by a sneering voice ala '70s punk rock, you have a minimalist take on horror rock with The Blood Brothers. The better songs here are

"Doctor Doctor", the tempo-shifting "Marooned on Piano Island" and "This Adultery is Ripe." Sadly, the other songs are marred by sonic monotony for a band with demonstrated potential for inventiveness. If you like horror movies and the band Ink and Dagger, give this a listen.

The Fuses • Are Lies • Reptilian Records • What's old isn't always new again. This sounds like a reissue of an '80s political punk band. That would be great, but last I checked it was the year 2000. The Fuses cite their influences as Buzzcocks, Wire, Gang of Four, and Minutemen. The Fuses pay good tribute to these bands, so if you like those bands and that sound, this may be up your alley.

The Go-Nuts • Dunk and Cover • Lookout Records • It is a sad thing, but I must destroy this disc. What makes it especially sad is the fact that I really like it. The major problem is that the songs (especially the "Fabulous Go Nuts Theme Song") are so damn catchy that you can't get them out of your head without heavy equipment. These guys have managed to invent an entirely new genre of music: Snack Rock. It sounds suspiciously like pop-punk, but every song deals with snack foods in some way. This is a very funny, very good disc. I will miss it.

The Hives • Veni Vidi Vicious • Epitaph/Burning Heart • Hailing from Fagersta, Sweden, retro rockers The Hives forge a sound that's entirely American by borrowing freely from '50s rock, '60s garage rock and '70s punk rock. There is potential here, but the less than stellar production and the cheap packaging keep this from becoming anything more than a mere novelty record. However, don't hold that against them, because the focus with these mods is most certainly on the live show. There's simply too much fun here to be contained on CD.

The Lesser Birds of Paradise • A Suitable Frame • Loosethread Recordings • Mark Janka intended this to be a solo project. Instead, it blossomed into a full-blown band with five total members. Janka is still the frontman, penning creative, sometimes personal, stories and singing them in a soft, sensitive voice that is beyond perfect (his vocals remind me of John Samson of The Weakerthans with musical qualities of Luna). The tunes on here are slow and soothing, melodic and musically magical - country charm with an indie touch.

The Letter E • No 5ive Long Player • Tiger Style Records • The Letter E was formed over three years ago by members of June 44, Rex, and Blue Man Group. This instrumental full length debut sports guitars, bass and drums, accentuated by guest musicians playing drums, strings, keys, and horns. *No 5ive Long Player* doesn't aspire to lofty goals, but rather it simply entertains the listener with mid-tempo, somewhat light fare songs.

The Mercury Project • Luckie Strike • Fastmusic • This is an eclectic record, starting off with a punk screamer song, then moving to a poppy number and varying throughout. The majority of this album is in a poppy alternative rock vein, with solid female vocals. "Routine" is the stand out track to listen for.

The Movieline • This Time Next Year • Revelation Records • Combining elements of hardcore, pop-punk, emo and indie rock, The Movieline offer twelve tracks of melodic, energetic, tempo-changing tunes. The vocals are boyish, filled with angst and delivered honestly. The music supports the heartfelt, emotional aspects of the songs by pounding out sturdy rhythms and infectious melodies with a hardcore intensity. This is a band to watch out for - I expect it'll become a mainstay in the punk scene.

The Others • 8 Song Demo • self-released • Fronted

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

by Lucy Risso on guitar and lead vocals, The Others are a powerful, indie-rock quartet from the DC area. They were most recently featured on Deep Elm's "Emo Diaries Chapter 5" and for good reason. The Others have strong emotional aspects to their music. The female vocals are superb, backed up by powerful, intense rock. They've shared the stage with many bands, from The Dismemberment Plan to Velocity Girl to Juliana Theory. Now it's The Others turn to be center-stage.

The Rayguns • Talentless Fools • Tomato Head Records • "Ska-pop-geek rock, served up Amish tough" OK, cool. The Rayguns have all the lyrical depth of the Dead Milkmen, but they're so much fun to listen to. Heavy on the horns and driving guitar, these boys from Topeka, Kansas got it all figured out. I'm still wandering around singing their hooks

The Secondhands • The Same Trains • Kick Save Records • What's curious about The Secondhands is not that they play instrumental ska/reggae, it's that they're from Kansas. What the hell are these guys from the heartland playing music that originated thousands of miles away? Whatever the circumstances that led to their formation we may never know, but you need to know that The Secondhands are superb. Even though the ska fad came and went, you should still give *The Same Trains* a listen. You will be pleasantly surprised.

The Spooks • S.I.O.S.O.S. Volume One • Artemis • Hip hop is at the forefront of today's popular music. And rightfully so. The music transcends itself so often that last year's beats are already archaic while modern rock continues to sound stale. It's because groups like Wu-Tang, Outcast and now The Spooks continually push the envelope. This new clan is surprisingly good, producing fresh, innovative sounds that are submerged in what appears to be tightly organized and legitimate "songs". Add one hell of a chanteuse and you have a near classic hip-hop record.

The Stereo • New Tokyo Is Calling EP • Fueled By Ramen • Blasting forth with a style that lends them to sound like Green Day meets Journey, The Stereo rocks uptempo, hyper-melodic, pop-rock gems. Each of the four tracks on this new offering (again produced by J. Robbins) is loaded with hooks and choruses that you'll be singing along with immediately.

The Story So Far • When Fortune Smiled • Hopeless Records • This six-song EP is a gem. These guys have a sound to be reckoned with. It is definitely pop-punk, but without the slick, sugary-coating that you get from so many bands today. The sound is more raw: a little more distortion, a little more anger, a little more listenable. This is a disc that starts out with a punch and keeps punching all the way through.

The Stryder • Masquerade in the Key of Crime • Equal Vision • These four guys have perfected the art of creating pop-infused rock music. Instead of allowing the melodies and pop aspects to sugar-coat the "rock" aspects, The Stryder uses these aspects to suck in the listener. From there it's a hook-filled journey through emotionally charged, guitar soaring, vocally-wowling rock tunes. These 12 tracks came as a surprise, impressing me with their tight orchestration and creativity. I've been bobbing my head ever since.

The Walnut Street Project • Magic Patterns • Dance Explosion Records • You know the whole "can't judge a book by its cover" thing? I say posh to that. When I picked this up I said "emo" and emo is what it is. It's a bit poppier though. They remind me of Plumb at times. The music is solid and they

have some real nice, tight hooks. My advice to the band is to turn down the lead vocalist's mic. Not because she's bad but she comes through a bit loud (she's awfully cute, too!). I know the band couldn't give a rat's ass what I think about the mix on their CD, and I really do think they're good, I'm just trying to help. I think it would give their sound a more somber feel, especially on a track like "Turner Station." Then again, maybe they aren't going for a more somber feel. Never mind, I'm just going to shut up now.

Totimoshi • self-titled • self-released • This Oakland trio's sound is a bit too fast to be considered sludge-rock, but it's close. The guitars are low and fuzzy, the drums in-your-face. The singing is a combination of Eddie Vedder, Scott Weiland, and an old, crotchety woman (don't ask, you'll have to hear it).

Twelve Tribes • Instruments • Eulogy Records • Ah, there it is. I knew there would be one in here somewhere. My editor's so good to me. **HARDCORE**, baby!!! Thrashing, neck-lashing, head-bashing hardcore! I don't know any other way to describe it. Is it good? Yep. Plus, it's only a five-song EP so you really can't go wrong. Word.

Union 13 • Youth, Betrayal, and the Awakening • Epitaph Records • I love these guys and this disc did not let me down. There is all the energy, anger and talent I have come to expect from Union 13. These 17 politically charged tracks get a message across without being preachy and whiney. This is rocking, fast, but still melodic. Definitely worth the price of admission.

Unit F • Hollow City • Finger Records • There was a lot of promotional material with this disc. That usually means that the music can't stand on its own. This disc was OK. It has some fun tunes like "My Baby Barfed" and "Jesus in Spaghetti". They have an old '80s metal sound. It's like a punk band mixed with Piledriver or Overkill. It took me a while to decide which band they reminded me of. Remember Green Jelly? They sound like them, but not as good.

Until The End • self-titled • Equal Vision • Trying to "give kids a positive [straight-edge] message" this five-piece hardcore band from south Florida has, at least, succeeded in creating some ferociously intense music. The drums pound, kick drum thumping rapidly as guitars crunch through each new chord with a hearty bass line to back it up. The vocals are both spoken and screamed, an aggressive blend. This five-song debut is a great start – committed, creative and capable of destroying your hearing.

Up In Arms • Fight to the Death • Uprising Records • This is fierce old-school hardcore. These five guys are bringing some anger and life back to the music. There is nothing soft and fuzzy about this. If you like hardcore to be, well, hard, then check this out.

Various Artists • 4-band split CD • Grub Records • This is a split with four bands contributing between 5 and 7 songs. The bands: Bedford; The Supereighteen;

Sometimes 7; and The Floatation Walls run the gamut from pop-rock to just strange. Most of the disc is pretty good, but I don't think I'd sit through an entire CD from any of these bands. The Floatation Walls were the highlight of this disc with a strange musical sense and some cool sounds. It is worth checking out for the measly \$6 ppd they are asking.

Various Artists • Culture Shock Punk Rock • Tomato Head • I don't even have to review this one. The bands speak for themselves – Digger, MU330, Alkaline Trio, and 24 other great bands and tracks. This is high on my list of great compilations, spanning the sounds of punk, indie rock, emo, pop punk, and ska. It should be in the collection of all punk enthusiasts, past, present, and future.

Various Artists • Digging It Up • Grub Records • Here is another release from Grub and thank goodness the sound is infinitely better than the cacophonous *Out Of The Woodwork* album (also reviewed). Here we can hear the bands and we like what we hear. There is punk, ska and hardcore and most of it is pretty darned good. There are a few clinkers but, hey, there are 29 songs and 29 bands. You can't have it all. This sampler is well worth giving a listen. There is info about each band given for when you find your new favorite.

Various Artists • For the Benefit of Mr. T • Their Old Stuff is Better Records • Nowhere on this CD does it say if the money from its sale will actually go to Mr. T or not, who announced in 1998 that he was battling lymphoma, and was apparently broke. The songs on this CD sound very lo-fi, others sound like they were actually recorded in a studio. The styles vary, from rap-rock to metal, and messy electronica. I only recognized two bands on here, Victoria Principle and Slackjaw, but besides them, I was clueless. There's only one reason to get this CD, and that is because Mr. T himself has a track, a little ditty called "Treat Your Mother Right." Think of Eddie Murphy's hilarious "Party all the Time" but with the Mohawked-one grunting through the lyrics. It's scary and funny and worthy of collecting. Play it at your next party and watch people's jaws drop.

Various Artists • Holiday Matinee CD Compilation Vol. 2 • Better Looking Records • The bands on this compilation all enjoy publicity from Holiday Matinee, hence the CD's title. Most of the songs have been recorded this year, with unreleased ones from The Busy Signals and The Album Leaf. Also appearing are No Knife, Cursive, Tiara, The Mercury Program, Tristeza, The Faint, and Vue, among others. This is an excellent compilation, featuring bands that perhaps don't get the attention that they should.

Various Artists • Live at the Complex 2 • Entartete Kunst Records • Most of the "degenerate" (their



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words, not mine) artists on this compilation live in a "Complex" in San Francisco. The music covers the electronic music spectrum, from Drum and Bass, to Breakbeat, to Trip-Hop and more. I use these terms loosely, since the songs don't stay constrained by genre definitions and evolve into their own works of art, which they refer to as No Field Abstract. Artists include Oddjob, Healamonster, Tej, Phantom Patient, Pinkwater and the sometimes disturbing spoken word tracks by Raw Knowledge. I would run out and get a copy of this comp as soon as possible, since there are only 1000 in print.

Various Artists • New Sounds New York Volume 1 • NSNY • The debut release for this NYC label is a compilation featuring 10 bands, all from NYC. Most of the bands are punk or, at least, punk-influenced. There are varying styles on here — from hardcore to garage punk to noise to experimental rock — and, for the most part, they're performed quite well. Bands include The Kill Van Kull, Elvis 77, GutterGirl, Emok and more.

Various Artists • Out of the Woodwork • Grub Records • There are 24 songs on this disc and most of them are so poorly recorded that they are painful to sit through. Remember when you were cool and in a band in high school and you put your little cheap-ass tape recorder in the corner when you practiced and it sounded like the shit that it was? That's what this sounds like. I'm sure that some of the songs are great, but the sound quality is so bad that this disc isn't worth the \$3 it costs.

Various Artists • The Ecstasy of the Agony • Alternative Tentacles • An amazing 30 tracks fill 75+ minutes of this compilation, 11 of which are either previously unreleased or exclusive to this album. Most acts on here are punk or hardcore bands, like Amebix, SNFU, Pitchshifter, Lard, or Ratos De Porao. However, some tracks are spoken word, by the likes of Noam Chomsky, Jello Biafra, and Mumia Abu-Jamal. As with anything the former Dead Kennedys frontman is involved with, this comp is very political and well worth the \$6 price tag.

Vicious Delite • Vicious Delite • Triple X Records • It must be my lucky day. I got to review Stephen Pearcy's greatest hits disc and now this, his new band's release. Rock on!!! This is '80s metal updated just a tad. It's not as glommy and the guitars are more straight-ahead and crunchy. If you don't like the Tools and the Panteras and the other metal bands of 2000, this is for you.

Voodoo Glow Skulls • Symbolic • Epitaph Records • Has it really been 12 years? For more than a decade, the Voodoo Glow Skulls have been pounding at their instruments, first as a punk quartet, and eventually transforming into the bilingual ska-core group that has just released *Symbolic*, their fifth full length. Undaunted by the passing fad that was ska, they press on, as fast and furious as they've ever been. From listening to this CD, I get the feeling that they are not going to stop anytime soon.

Waxwing • One for the Ride • Second Nature Recordings • This band from the Northwest is ready to take on the entire country after building a fanbase in their area. It shouldn't be too hard, given the collection of tunes that is *One for the Ride*. They combine power and beauty in their songs, with truly strained and emotional vocals pleading over guitar hooks. It shows that every member of Waxwing is passionate about their music.

Got a CD? As long as the release isn't on a major label or cassette (vinyl is ok), send it our way - address on page 4.

Vinyl releases

Churl • self-titled 7" • Grub Records • This trio from Virginia rock out five uptempo, hardcore-punk tunes on this release. The recording is only so-so, giving it a rougher sound, adding to its already old-school feel. While this doesn't break new ground, it's not bad for those who miss punk served the way it used to be, angry, fast and under-produced.

EC8OR • I Won't Pay/Gimme Nyquil All Night Long 7" • DHR • This is a Digital Hardcore Records limited release of two tracks by EC8OR. "I Won't Pay" is a short blast of noise, though surprisingly "Gimme Nyquil..." is a cohesive song with guitar riffage and a droll delivery of vocals. It's the most accessible track I've heard from these folks in a long time. Definitely worth checking out if you can find it.

Get High • self-titled 7" • Aloes International • This is hard rock created by four guys from Massachusetts. The music is aggressive, but not hardcore. Instead it uses funkier styles, thick basslines and a fairly uptempo pace to generate the intensity. The four songs on here, while they don't blow me away, definitely display the band's creative abilities and has me convinced they must put on a killer live show.

Helen Zachariah • Save The Plants 7" • NDN Records • Helen is an artistic songwriter (and a painter) from Wales. The opening track is a meandering and repetitive pop tune. That's followed by a song that drags on with noisy guitar work and mostly-spoken vocals. The B side is not much different than the A side, offering hyper-artistic, noisy, pop with vocals that are probably the best part of this mediocre release.

Semi-Truth • You Call 7" • NDN Records • Fronted by Jeremy Gluck (ex-The Barracudas), this five-piece creates pop songs with a rock edge. The vocals are good, except they are constantly being manipulated, taking away from how good Gluck really sounds. Despite the random bursts of noisiness, there's a definite Pixies influence throughout this three-song record, but not enough to make this an impressive release by any means.

Soulviet Union • When You Get On/Let's See 12" • Ambassador Records • Soulvient Union is a five member hip-hop crew from the northeast. This two-song 12" flows smoothly with solid beats and rhyme delivery. The loops on "When You Get On" create a thuggish sound, akin to Mobb Deep, but I wouldn't call this gangsta rap - it's far more interesting. On the flip side, "Let's See" has more of a party bounce too it, a funky, quick spit song that is repetitive, but still highly enjoyable.

The Wayouts • self-titled 7" • Harmless Records • It's two bad these are the final two songs from this Chicago-area quartet. Their sound is emotional-charged rock with creative instrumentation. They make great use of tempo changes and crescendos within their songs to bring out the driving, more aggressive aspects to their song writing. I will miss them.

Various Artists • Free Mumia 10" • Entartete Kunst • This benefit album for Mumia Abu Jamal features speeches by Christina Gutierrez and revolutionary organizer Pam Africa with music on the flip-side. Gutierrez opens the spoken word with a poignant and heartfelt speech about justice, equality and human rights. Africa delivers two equally heartfelt speeches from a more aggressive perspective with a no-shit attitude about U.S. human rights violations, the death penalty and our corrupt government. The music on side B, created by DJ Slo Mo, is a hip-hop driven instrumental track loaded with socio-political samples, creative mixing and a "slo-mo" beat that pulls you along with each thump.

Various Artists • Paint By Numbers 7" • Nice Transportation Records • Side A features Stomp Recreational Choir presenting a rapid-fire punk rock tune with solid tempo changes and fairly basic chord progression. Following that is Shortround with a poorly recorded hardcore number. The B Side offers a solid, old school, DC-ish punk tune from Autumn 80 along with a rocking, uptempo, catchy and creative punk ditty from Pennies on a Rail.

Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

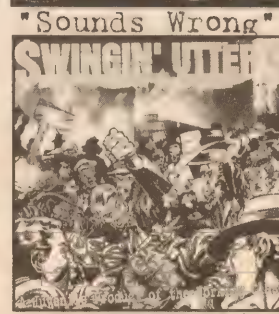
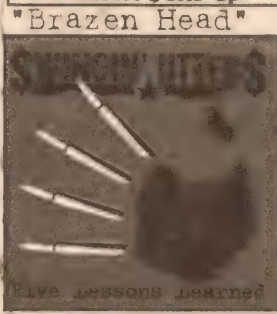
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Info: www.glsen.org, 212.727.0135 x109

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When: October 7, 2000
Where: Bay Area, California
Info: 404-768-2529

National Coming Out Day
When: October 11, 2000
Where: Nationwide
Info: www.hrc.org/ncop/guide.html

World March of Women 2000
When: October 15, 2000
Where: Washington DC
Info: www.worldmarch.org

11th Annual Bioneers Conference
When: October 20, 2000
Where: Marin Center, San Rafael, CA
Info: www.bioneers.org/

The Friends' Peace Testimony: History or Possibility?
When: November 9-12, 2000
Where: Wyndham Washington Hotel, DC
Info: 202-547-6000 or lauren@fcnl.org

Statewide Conf. sponsored by People of Faith Against the Death Penalty
When: November 11-12, 2000
Where: Asheville, NC
Info: 919-933-7567

11th Annual Vigil & Action to Close the School of the Americas
When: November 17-19, 2000
Where: Ft. Benning, GA
Info: www.soaw.org

International Youth Peace Week
When: November 24-Dec. 1, 2000
Where: New York City
Info: 1-800-WRL-YOUTH

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When: November 25, 2000
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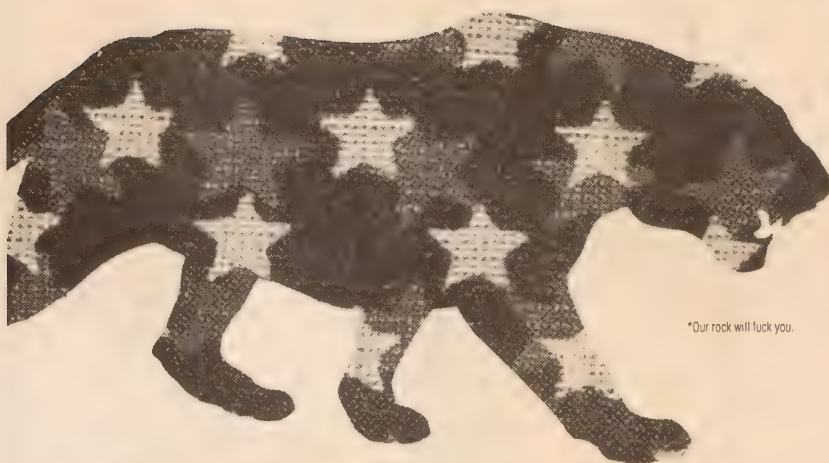
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Make An IMPACT on HIV/STDs

By
Jeffrey-
John
Nunziata

Please email questions to Jeff at: sk8board@worldnet.att.net

If you have any questions about HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and or sex and/or want information on HIV services and referrals anywhere in the United States please feel free to send an email to me or write a letter. If you just want referrals, please include the name of the town that you live in and/or the county and state so that I can more easily facilitate getting you hooked up with services. If you do not want your letter published, please state so. Please do not use your real name in your questions and please be aware that your emails are confidential and NO ONE has access to them except the writer. This service is provided for you FREE from IMPACT PRESS in cooperation with the State of Florida Department of Health HIV/AIDS Program Office, Tampa Bay.

If we choose your question we will send you a hella kool safer sex gift pack with lots of assorted condoms and lubes!

Q: Hey there IMPACT PRESS, thanks to all the peeps writing great articles and for giving me a place to ask a question that I didn't feel comfortable asking anywhere else. This is how it is okay, I am 20 and my girlfriend is 19. We both got HIV. I found out and since then I have been to the AIDS clinic and it was a joke. The doctors didn't give a shit about us so we stopped going. My question is, can you explain if HIV, not AIDS, can go dormant in the body? Is this a new thing that just was discovered, cause I heard it on the news a week ago? Also, what are things that may make it not dormant? About my health, since I can tell from reading past articles you generally want to know that, I drink every weekend more or less, but not too much. I also smoke cigarettes as well as smoke pot and do some club drugs. But nothing else. PLEASE, let me know the answer to the questions because I really want to do something about this if I can. Thanks again, IMPACT PRESS, for being the

only place I trust enough to turn to for help with this.

"Partied 1 too many times" Central Florida

A: The answer to your question is YES, HIV can become dormant in your body, and the good news is that you may have some control over that! I had to do some research in order to find out how long we've known about "dormancy" and the earliest record I could find is in 1990. A doctor from Harvard Medical School presented a paper on "Achieving Viral Dormancy" where it was stated that "in T-cells, HIV can lie dormant." But the problem is that the complicated mechanisms for controlling the growth/replication of HIV do not operate in isolation and are intimately intertwined with many other things going on in your body. Once HIV has incorporated itself into your cells, the only way to minimize negative effects is through encouraging it to become dormant.

There are three genes that control how fast the virus will spread. You do not want to trigger growth whether a low viral increase or a high viral increase. As I stated above, you have control over this to some extent through things that you do to your body. Since this paper was presented in 1990, there has been a library of new information about viral dormancy and control over HIV and how to achieve a lower viral load.

Every time you smoke a cigarette, you smoke a joint, you drink alcohol, you don't get enough sleep, you get stressed out, you don't eat right, you can stimulate your immune system. By stimulating your immune system you can stimulate HIV. When HIV becomes stimulated it can replicate/spread. The more HIV that is produced in


your body (the higher the viral load) the more it can attack the T-cells in your immune system, making you sicker. The key here is to try your best to not stimulate HIV. It's a lot easier than it sounds, but you can do things about it. In a perfect world, the best thing to do would be to not drink or smoke or do drugs, but if you choose not to abstain then try to cut back the number of cigarettes you smoke or the number of beers you drink, etc.


There is another thing that you can do and since you've read my column I know that you know that I'm going to encourage you to seek medical attention. Here's the situation. In central Florida there are many places where you can seek HIV services even if you don't have the money to afford it. Since you had a bad experience with the last doctor you saw, in many of the clinics there may be another physician or another facility that offers HIV medical services. The importance of seeing a doctor is that through this you can find out your viral load through a test. It will tell you how much HIV you have and if there is more or less than the last time you had the test done. You can also be put on medications, regardless of your personal finances, that can slow down the process of viral replication. Please call the Florida AIDS Hotline if you want to find out the locations of clinics around you at 1-800-FLA-AIDS.

Thanks for the positive feedback and I hope that we at IMPACT PRESS have been of some help to you. Best of luck and let me know if you decide to go see a doctor.

Mail letters to:





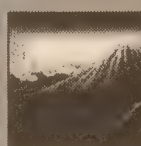
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Debunking Black Myths in the 21st Century

By Peggy Butler

Foreword: While standing in line at the supermarket, I spotted a magazine dangling carelessly from a grocery cart. Red, with white and blue details, the coloring suggested it was one of those patriotic tabloids, so popular among right-wing conservatives.

As an avid reader, I was anxious to see what was inside. Bending over, I grabbed the magazine and opened it. The headline, "African-Americans Comprise 57% of All New HIV Infections," glared back at me.

Leafing through the publication, which contained page after page of anti-Black rhetoric, I was compelled to write the following editorial.



When you read anything with respect to African-Americans, it is generally negative. We are identified as the major consumers of drugs, primal carriers of the HIV virus, a mainstay of the welfare system, and the most barbaric group to inhabit the universe.

At times it appears that we are just rotating on our axis, and getting absolutely nowhere. If that statement is true, inevitably we will find ourselves devoid of all rights and privileges vital to the continuation of our existence.

From these negative experiences has come strength and courage of the highest caliber. Society depicts us as battered and despondent. But they are wrong in making those assumptions. We are not lost souls stumbling through life looking for an easy way out.

We can overcome our current problems through persistence, hard work and undaunted fortitude. Only when these solutions are undertaken will the task of prevailing over our problems be executed at greater speed.

In order to rectify injustices, both hereditary and self-imposed, we must become tired of the demeaning actions levied against us. We must become tired of hearing about the grim statistics regarding our social and economic status. We must become tired of the experts telling us who we are, what we are, and what we should be. As an African-American, I am constantly bombarded by negative messages from the media, politicians, and other sources, insinuating my chances of achieving equality with Whites on any level is almost zero. Enough is enough! It's time to set the record straight.

When we change the way we see ourselves, respect from other races will follow. When we come to grips with the reality of what is happening, we can take decisive steps to overcome all barriers relevant to our future.

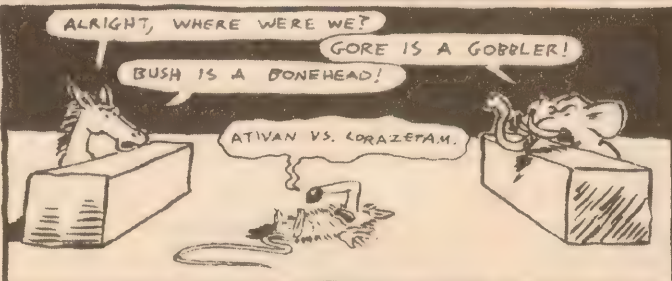
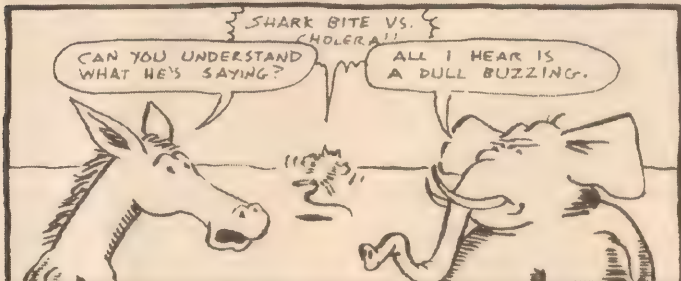
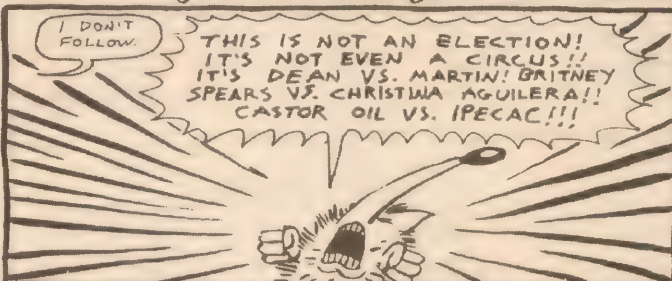
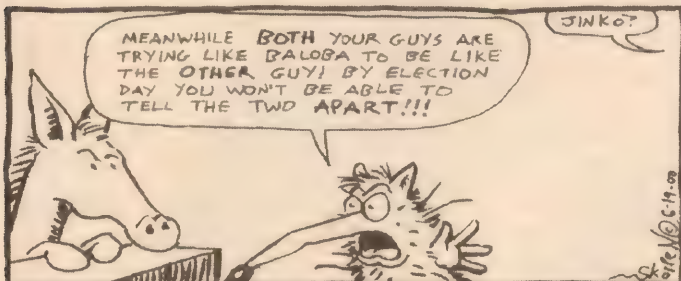
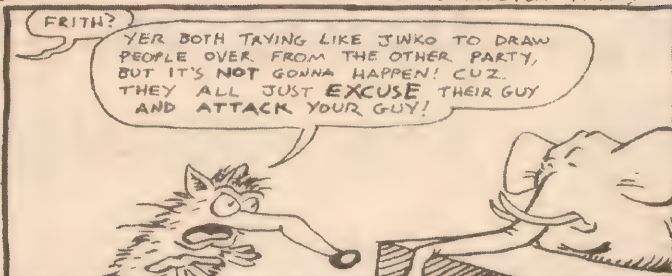
We can overcome our educational dilemma by continually stressing that knowledge is the key ingredient to any successful juncture. We should encourage our youth to stay in school and stop adhering to the concept that Blacks are intellectually inferior to Whites. That means Blacks must place more emphasis on education instead of athletics. In the Black community it should be pointed out that it is just as honorable to be a good student as it is to be a great football player. There is nothing more pathetic than a

(OVERCOME, continued on page 50)

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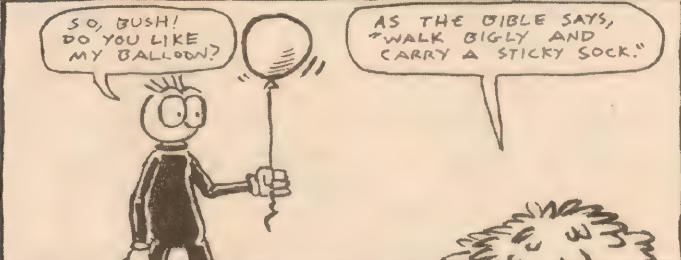
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U.S. plots course to become "Masters of Space"

by Bruce Gagnon

CLINTON DELAYS NMD, TMD SWELLS

On September 1, President Clinton, speaking at Georgetown University, declared that he could not "conclude that we have enough confidence in the technology to move forward to deployment" of National Missile Defense (NMD) at this time. Clinton did, however, state that the Pentagon would continue with 16 more NMD tests at \$100,000 each. Clinton maintained that there was not a net loss in his decision because a "delay won't affect the 2006-2007 timetable for deployment."

There were essentially two main factors behind Clinton's decision to delay NMD deployment. First was the embarrassing reality of the two most recent test failures. If the July 7 test had succeeded, the Pentagon wanted to press forward with an initial deployment of 20 interceptor missiles in Alaska by 2005. The second factor was the strong opposition to deployment by European allies. In fact, in Clinton's speech he acknowledged that European opposition was key to the delay and made clear that his administration, and the next, would need to "complete" efforts to get the consent of the allies on the necessary upgrades to U.S. radar systems that will coordinate a new Star Wars program.

Fearing the diplomatic repercussions, Clinton's national security adviser, Samuel Berger, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and her deputy, Strobe Talbott, opposed moving forward with deployment. Secretary of Defense William Cohen was the most forceful advocate of fielding NMD as soon as possible and recommended to Clinton that he go ahead with initial construction of the Shemya, Alaska radar that is needed to direct the new Star Wars program.

Russia, which has been publicly stating that NMD is a program intended to give the U.S. a first strike capability, met Clinton's delay decision with a new call for massive elimination of nuclear weapons. Vladimir Putin has called for new talks on a strategic arms reduction treaty (Start III) but recently reminded the U.S. that further cuts would only be possible if the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty was honored. And, at the U.N.'s recent Millennium Summit in New York, Putin called for an end to the "militarization of space."

China has renewed its long stated call for "negotiation and conclusion of an international legal instrument or instruments on the

prevention of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space." So far the U.S. has refused to participate in any negotiations calling for such a space weapons ban.

One of the few governments to criticize Clinton's delay decision was Taiwan. Lee Wen-Chung, a member of President Chen Shui-bian's party, said the NMD delay was regrettable and he hoped the new U.S. president would push the program forward more aggressively. Taiwan is being considered as a host site for deployment of U.S. Theater Missile Defense (TMD) systems.

THE NEXT PRESIDENT

George W. Bush has often stated that the U.S. must design and deploy "quantum leap weapons" that would dominate the battlefields of the future. Many believe he was talking about space-based lasers when he predicted laboratories like Sandia and Los Alamos in New Mexico would play a critical role in the development of "weapons that will allow America to define how wars are fought." When told of Clinton's delay decision, Bush stated that, "Should I be president, I'll seize the moment and develop an effective anti-ballistic missile system."

Al Gore supported Clinton's decision saying that a delay allowed more time for "additional testing" and would "allow the next President time to conduct updated discussions with other countries." But Gore concluded, "If I am elected President, I would also plan to use the extra time for a serious bipartisan dialogue about defensive systems aimed at establishing a consensus that clearly does not exist at this time."

Green Party candidate Ralph Nader and Socialist Party candidate David McReynolds are among the third party candidates that have taken the position that Star Wars deployments are destabilizing and are a waste of taxpayer dollars.

TMD UP NEXT

Theater Missile Defense (TMD) now appears to be the favored system for deployment. Also called boost-phase intercept, the

George W. Bush has often stated that the U.S. must design and deploy "quantum leap weapons" that would dominate the battlefields of the future.



art by eric spiller

Pentagon is accelerating its testing program as political support mounts. Among those now calling for full speed ahead on TMD are: Richard Garwin, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations; Sen. Joseph Biden (D-RI); Harold Brown, former Secretary of Defense under Carter; MIT Professor Ted Postol; Frank Gaffney, Director of Center for Security Policy; Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA); the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and ex-CIA directors John Deutch and R. James Woolsey. The \$5.1 billion that the U.S. will spend on missile defense in fiscal-year 2001 will be equally divided between TMD and NMD.

Even though TMD systems are "intended" to be deployed into regions of tension like the Middle East or Asia to protect troops, the TMD system could function as the same NMD system that Clinton decided to delay. According to Dr. Dean Wilkening, director of the science program at Stanford University's Center for International Security & Cooperation, "There's no clear, technical distinction between theater and NMD systems." Lt. Col Rick Lehner, a spokesman for the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) put it even more clearly when he told the New York Times, "All of these systems can have applicability to both TMD or NMD. It just depends on which direction the nation wants to go."

TMD systems are basically broken down into three sub-components: ground launched, sea launched, and air/space launched. The Army's ground launched programs, coordinated at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama include the Patriot (PAC-3), Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), Tactical High Energy Laser (THEL), and the Army Kinetic Energy Anti-Satellite (KEASAT) weapons. Added together, these systems would give

the Army the capability to destroy incoming missiles or satellites in either lower earth atmosphere (low tier) or above earth atmosphere (upper tier).

The Navy has also recently become more involved in TMD and has created a new Office for Missile Defense Operations. The new office will take command of all "testing and deployment" of Naval missile defense systems and will be based in Hawaii. According to one Naval spokesman, "The creation of this office is a clear, unequivocal statement that the U.S. Navy is committed to deploying a sea-based missile defense." The Navy system, outfitted on Aegis destroyers home ported in Japan, could site 100 miles off the coast of North Korea or China and shoot down missiles headed for the U.S. while still in their boost-phase. Proponents of this system argue that Naval TMD systems would provoke less diplomatic fallout (especially from European allies) than the proposed NMD system.

AIRBORNE LASER & SPACE-BASED LASER

The Air Force's Airborne Laser (ABL) program would put a powerful laser aboard a modified Boeing 747 and begin shooting down missiles by 2003. The \$11 billion program is being developed at Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, N.M. The Pentagon is assessing the vulnerability of all satellites in orbit to possible collateral damage from the ABL when fired at "enemy" targets.

The Senate Armed Services Committee in May ended its FY 2001 budget authorizations by adding \$30 million more to the Space-Based Laser (SBL) program which is now being developed by

Lockheed Martin, Boeing and TRW. The SBL lifecycle budget is estimated at \$30 billion. The BMDO is presently doing an Environmental Assessment of the program and a decision will be made at any time on the test site for the SBL program. Currently three testing sites are in the running: Kennedy Space Center in Florida, Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, and the Stennis Test Center in Mississippi. The airborne laser and space-based laser would be most effectively used as anti-satellite weapons.

NEW ASIAN PENTAGON STRATEGY

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, and the resulting eastward expansion of NATO, the U.S. has been able to essentially "lock down" its once great rival now called Russia. Increasingly, the major war games of the Pentagon take place in Asia. According to a Pentagon study called Asia 2005, "The threats are in Asia." The effort now underway, according to the Washington Post, is for the U.S. to "manage the rise of China as a great power." This, of course, will require a "bigger" military budget as the Pentagon puts an emphasis on expanding their naval, air and space power in the Pacific region.

Already the Air Force is upgrading bases in Guam and on Wake Island to handle more B-1 and B-2 bombers. Cruise missiles are being prepositioned in Guam and TMD is being widely promoted throughout the region. The Navy is expected to nearly double its presence in the Pacific in coming years. The U.S., with over 230,000 military personnel (including the Pacific fleet) assigned to the region, is worrying about recent South Korean and North Korean reunification talks. In a news briefing on July 5, Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated that, "I don't think we should consider pulling troops out of South Korea. I think our troops should remain

there, even if there were to be a unification." According to an article printed in *The Japan Times* by Larry Wortzel of the right-wing Heritage Foundation, "The U.S. acts as an honest broker with no territorial designs for hegemony, its military presence is perceived as a benign counterbalance to the mistrust that followed recent war experiences in the region."

China sees things differently. Presently with only 20 nuclear missiles capable of hitting the continental U.S., they believe that the U.S. is encroaching on their nation, preparing for battle with the last great Communist power. After the shock of the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, there was a serious debate in China about whether to accelerate the growth in their military spending. Contrary to this, a recent Pentagon report stated that China's Central Committee decided last summer to reaffirm their priority emphasis on economic development, foregoing major military expansion.

Secretary of Defense Cohen visited Australia in late July, after having just met with Chinese leaders, and urged the Aussies to increase their military spending to ensure their forces could support the U.S. if there was a war with China over Taiwan. Cohen also told Australia that the U.S. wants to test TMD from bases it intends to build in Western Australia and reminded the Aussies that their joint base, the Pine Gap satellite station, was a key installation in the new Star Wars system.

To top it all off, House Majority Whip Tom Delay (R-TX) recently boasted to reporters how he had confronted the Ambassador of China on Meet the Press. Delay grabbed his hand as if to shake it, but instead squeezed it as hard as he could and yanked the Ambassador up close to him, warning him not to underestimate the resolve of the American people. The Ambassador, deeply humiliated,



art by eric spiller

immediately left the national TV news set. The message was clear.

NASA & NAZI GERMANY: THE IRONIC CONNECTION

During WWII, Nazi Germany tested and used the V-2 rocket to attack cities in England and France. The V-2 program, led by Werner von Braun, was created at a site in northern Germany called Peenemunde. At this site slave labor was used to construct the rockets. In her book *Secret Agenda*, Linda Hunt (former executive producer of CNN's investigative unit) tells the horrid story of "Operation Paperclip" that brought over 1,600 Nazi scientists, largely escaping the Nuremberg trials, to the U.S. after the war to develop the U.S. space program. Von Braun, who had been a member of the Nazi SS, and his "team" were sent to Huntsville, Alabama where he eventually became the first director of the Marshall Space Flight Center. Peenemunde's V-2 flight test director, Kurt Debus, was eventually named the first director of the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

After the allies began bombing Peenemunde, the Nazi's moved the V-2 operation underground in Central Germany to a place called Mittelwerk and they created a concentration camp nearby called Dora to supply slave labor to Von Braun's rocket team. Flight testing continued at Peenemunde. Von Braun's brother Magnus, who also came to Huntsville, was in charge of gyroscope production at Mittelwerk. Slave laborers at Mittelwerk began to sabotage

the V-2 rockets and Werner Von Braun sent his staff to Mittelwerk to find out why the rockets were not working correctly. More than 200 prisoners suspected of sabotage were hanged at Mittelwerk. Mittelwerk's head of production, Arthur Rudolph, was later named project director of NASA's Saturn V rocket program that took the U.S. to the moon. By the time the allies liberated Mittelwerk and Dora, over 60,000 prisoners had been interned and over 20,000 never made it out alive. Former New York governor Hugh Carey, 18 years old at the time, was one of the American liberators who witnessed over 6,000 dead bodies at Dora upon their arrival.

Linda Hunt says that "exactly 40 years after the liberation of Dora, in April 1985, the Alabama Space & Rocket Museum paid tribute to 40 Germans who stood surrounded by the press, in front of the old V-2s and the Saturn V rocket they helped build for the U.S. Inside the museum, dozens of awards lay encased in glass as a memorial to Werner von Braun." Thus the U.S. space program was born. And similar to Hitler's slogan "Germany over all," the U.S. Space Command's motto today is "Master of Space." ☐

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Media ignores issues

(MEDIA, continued from page 11)

even goes on to call the protests "meaningless theater". I suppose this isn't quite as bad as the following page on which Stu Bykofsky has a full-page article about Mumia Abu-Jamal's case. He affectionately calls Mumia defenders (many of whom participated in these same protests) "Mumidiots".

In total, there were only three sentences in eight full pages of articles about the protests that addressed what was being protested. The campaign of police harassment, followed by the filtering of information through the corporate media, painted a picture of protesters with no direction, aimlessly causing chaos and fighting police officers (who reportedly did nothing but "keep their cool"). Any eyewitness, including myself, can tell you that what was reported and what was happening on the street were two different worlds.

These are not isolated incidents. In the April 16, 1999 issue of *The Washington Post*, the top story, as well as two full pages, were devoted to the massive mobilization of people against the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, who were meeting in Washington that day. However, the articles focused on incidents between protesters and police, the fashion of protesters, and offered a vague description of "global justice". Ironically, in the World News section of that very same paper, there was an article entitled, "Poor Nations' Leaders Back Washington Protesters". This article, on page A31, takes up barely one-quarter of a page and briefly describes how 77 leaders of the world's poorest nations (comprising 80% of the global population) joined in a summit to announce that they "side squarely with the thousands of protesters expected to descend on Washington". The leaders went on to state that the policies of the IMF and World Bank have "locked them into a cycle of poverty from which they cannot escape". Why is it that a summit of 77 heads of state were given so little attention, while pages were devoted to sensational stories about protester fashion and conflicts with police? The American public was denied information that would have given them a more complete and honest perspective on the nature of global politics. The Third World's struggle against global institutions like the IMF has been going on for years, yet the American media found it more important to focus on whether or not our president slept with interns.

So, yes Virginia, there were protests at the conventions. Even though there is no direct state control over the media, journalism in America has become a lucrative business. By giving these events minimal coverage, the mass media is essentially saying, "Yes, these things occurred, but they are not that important." Welcome to America's business of omission: where the truth is profit marginal, but the Häagen Dazs is good. ❧

Make an IMPACT

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting
<http://www.fair.org/>

Independent Media Center
<http://www.indymedia.org/index.php3>

We Shall Overcome

(OVERCOME, continued from page 46)

pro basketball player with an annual income of \$2 million who cannot read. How nauseating.

We can overcome the stigma of being the "chief" users of illegal substances, by complaining when TV shows portray us as addicts and dealers.

The networks have a history of depicting minorities in this dual role. Don't the executives at ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC realize that according to the *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics (1996)* Whites use drugs in greater quantities than Blacks? But how many Whites do you see on the 6 o'clock news in handcuffs, being carted off to jail? As long as we allow this sort of behavior to go unchecked it will continue. If Blacks would write to the networks, demanding to see more positive portrayals, the current stereotypical garbage could be eliminated.

We can overcome the stigma of being erroneously portrayed as the prime recipients of welfare by counteraction. That means finding jobs, and stop prescribing to the theory that AFDC and Food Stamps are necessary for our survival. They are not. Although more Caucasians receive assistance than Blacks, this interesting tidbit is traditionally overlooked. Does this come as a surprise?

We can overcome other problems — inadequate housing, teen pregnancy, high incarceration among Black men, and Black-on-Black violence — by using every weapon at our disposal. To start with, we should become familiar with the complex mechanism of the judicial system. Similarly, we should make a genuine effort to show more kindness, patience and tolerance toward each other.

In observing our current situation I am convinced that the era of petty tactics is over. What we need now is ACTION, not comatose mish-mash. COURAGE, not cowardice. HELL-RAISING, not passiveness. When I say hell-raising, I am not implying that Blacks should commit acts of violence or mistreat their oppressors. However, I am suggesting that we create an atmosphere of CHANGE, using tact and diplomacy.

If we really want to end 500 years of bondage, we must recognize the problems and eliminate them by any means necessary. It is ridiculous for us to stand by quietly and wait for Caucasians to come to our rescue. No matter how much you sugar coat it, these are *our* problems, not theirs. And we are the only ones capable of solving them.

Over the centuries, Blacks have been described as rebellious, militant, and courageous. Whether that depiction is true is debatable. But one thing is certain: If we are going to raise hell, why not raise it in the right way, with the right people, at the right time. Only through boldness and perseverance will we finally overcome. ❧

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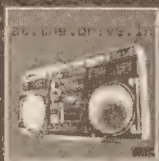
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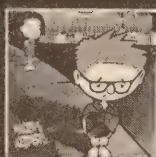
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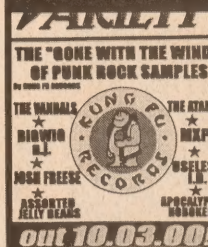
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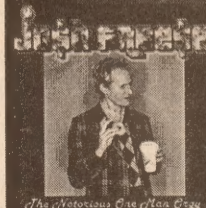
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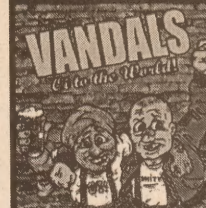
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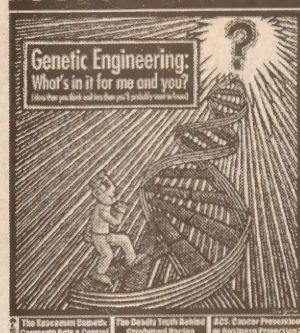
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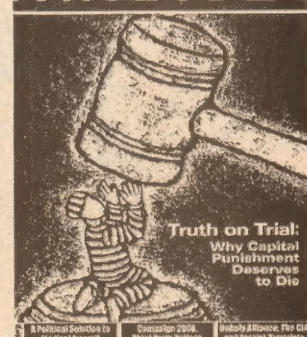
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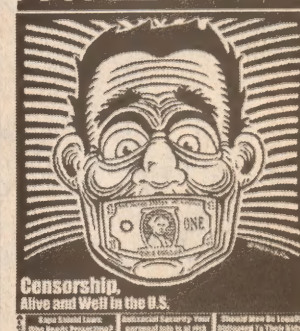
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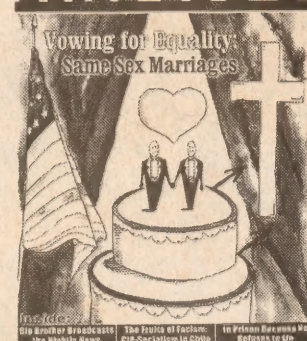
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